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The master and his men

THE MASTER AND HIS MEN

By the Same Author

MAN AND HIS CHARACTER

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STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN ENTERPRISE

BY
F. TOWNLEY LORD, D.D.

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FOREWORD

MANY years ago a famous American professor published a book which has exercised a profound influence on Christian thought ever since: partly because of the brilliance of its author, William James; partly on account of the masterly way in which the subject was treated. His aim was to inquire into the meaning of religious experience, and he gave to his book the attractive title, "The Varieties of Religious Experience." He could not have chosen a better title, for the religious life takes many forms and seeks various channels of expression. The Christian life, ever since Jesus astonished the world into clearer thinking and purer living, has been marked by great variety. How remarkable that such different types of men and women have proudly called themselves the Master's followers!

If we could gather together typical Christians from the centuries of Christian history

they would form an amazing assembly; philosophers side by side with rough men of action, masters and servants, adventurous spirits and retiring monastics, eminent statesmen and humble toilers at a common trade —men and women of every colour and creed and point of view. "Can it be possible," we ask, "that all these have followed the same Lord?" They have, each in his own way, and this in itself is the clearest indication of the essential adaptability of the Christian spirit. When the Church started out on her adventurous voyage she was not heavily loaded with formal enactments, detailed schemes, and credal statements. Only gradually were Christ's servants able to crystallize their ideas about Him and to create machinery for the smoother running of the Christian society. And as the years rolled by it was found that Christian enthusiasm could express itself in a hundred ways. This is the reason why Church history, properly understood, is one of the most fascinating of all studies. We pass from scene to scene, finding ever new ways of speaking about the Gospel, ever new

methods of carrying that Gospel into the common practice of daily life.

Our purpose in these studies is to take some account of this variety. We shall note how, in different ages, men and women who have caught a vision of the splendour of Christ set out to reflect that splendour to their own world and in their own way. The treatment will necessarily be broad, avoiding as far as possible technicalities and disputed points, but supplying a general sketch of those great movements which have enriched our Christian history. Probably the best and certainly the most interesting method is the study of typical men, for great movements are generally centred in great lives, and dominating principles are seen most clearly when they are seen at work.

We are encouraged to this method by the New Testament itself, for God's greatest truth became incarnate, and the religion of the New Testament has a place for speculations only as they are capable of translation into terms of service. We shall find that Christian enterprise is well expressed in terms of the missionary spirit, taking that

term in its widest and most real sense. Men who really know Christ as Saviour and Teacher cannot refrain from an attempt to make that experience known to others. Like Paul, they feel a divine constraint. It is this compulsion, wherein the true Christian finds his real liberty, that has filled the page of Christian history with glorious achievement.

F. T. L.

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THE
MASTER AND HIS MEN

CHAPTER I

THE MEN WHO KNEW THE MASTER

THE first record of Christian experience is the New Testament, and there we have the story of the men who knew the Master.

There were many circles of men and women in Palestine who may be said to have known Christ. Some knew who He was, knew about His family and His skill as a carpenter, and may have regarded Him as somewhat extraordinary both in His claims and manner of life. Others, like Mary and Martha and Lazarus, came into more intimate contact with Him in the simple grace of home life. Some there were, like Nicodemus, who were privileged to have never-to-be-forgotten interviews with Him. There were seventy who were sent out, two by two, to prepare the people for His coming. But the circle with which we are specially concerned is

that privileged band of men whom Jesus called to be, in a special sense, His disciples. He called them apostles, and they were required to forsake their old lives and follow Him wheresoever He went, aiding Him in His ministry, strengthening Him by their sympathy, and, above all, being trained by intercourse with Him to carry on His work after He had gone. In some ways they formed a strange group. Peter, who was to become the man of rock, and Andrew his brother, James and John, "sons of thunder," Philip the earnest inquirer, Bartholomew the guileless, Thomas the melancholy, Matthew the tax-gatherer, James of Alphæus, Thaddæus of the three names, Simon the Zealot —these are the men whom we celebrate as "the glorious company of the apostles." Their glory, we may be sure, lay in their opportunities of comradeship with Him rather than in any personal qualities of their own when they began their career.

As a group they could not boast of social distinction or academic attainment. Fishermen and publicans and quondam zealots were not, from the world's point of view,

the most likely men; very unlikely, indeed, to lead a movement which was to leave its influence in the world's schools of philosophy, music, and art, as well as in the more pedestrian realms of human activity. We are to think of them, however, not as they were when they began, but as what they became through contact with Christ. "They stand," says Dr. Stalker,[1] "like a row of noble pillars towering afar across the flats of time. But the sunlight that shines on them, and makes them visible, comes entirely from Him. He gave them all their greatness; and theirs is one of the most striking evidences of His. What must He have been whose influence imparted to them such magnitude of character and made them fit for so gigantic a task!" Obscurity envelops the names of some of them, and one we would rather forget, as faithless to his high trust; but, for the rest, they did magnificently. Not without immaturities and faults, they did carry on the Master's work, and there were among them those who knew how

[1] "Life of Christ," 75.

to die as well as live for the sake of the Name. And the variety within this little group was surely prophetic of that greater variety which was to mark the course of Christian history in the ages that followed.

Their experience with Jesus may be described as romantic. Not all the formalism of their environment and the occasional dimness of their own vision could rob their association with Him of its poetry. He took them out of commonplace and prosaic experience into the romance of a great enterprise. Peter left his boats and nets to travel with the Master into the mysterious glories of a Mount of Transfiguration. Matthew, we may be sure, did not find much romance in the collection of taxes; scorn, rather, and social ostracism, the lot of a Jew who had hired himself to the Roman Government to "do the heathen's work for the heathen's gold, profiting by the shame and oppression of his countrymen." But once he had changed the Civil Service for the Master's he never wished to go back; he found the new life more thrilling than he could ever have believed. There was one member of

the band, Simon the Zealot, who had known the stirrings of political enthusiasm. The epithet Zelotes, says Bruce,[1] connects Simon unmistakably with the famous party which rose in rebellion under Judas in the days of the taxing, some twenty years before Christ's ministry began, when Judæa and Samaria were brought under the direct government of Rome. He came to Christ, then, as an enthusiast, accustomed to quick action and vigorous propaganda, to take on a revolutionary campaign of another order, with the spiritual weapons of love and service.

These men embarked upon a great adventure. What other word can describe their going forth at the command of One whose principles seemed to be in such direct opposition to the established order? Theirs was to be the exciting privilege of criticising traditional ways of life, of attacking vested interests in the ecclesiasticism of their time. They were to be the henchmen of One who made astounding claims and adopted novel methods. He sent

[1] "Training of the Twelve," p. 34.

them forth with a sublime disregard of precautionary measures: "Freely ye have received," He said to them; "freely give. Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff: for the labourer is worthy of his food." They were to be continual examples of a simple yet profound faith.

Their life with Christ was daily enlightenment. When they first knew Him they had not merely much to learn, but much to unlearn. Now and again in the Gospel records we find them at fault; they were children of their age, sharing some of their age's prejudices. They could not easily attain to His breadth and spirituality—but then, who can? With infinite patience He took them in hand and led them into the way of understanding. If they could not follow Him in some parable delivered to the crowd, He was ready with a little explanation in private when the crowd had dispersed. When some miracle left them gasping and bewildered, it was a quiet whisper that revealed the secret and the purpose of this amazing power.

There was no ostentation in His method, no striving after mere effect, but they could not watch Him day after day without learning what it was He meant them to do. They heard Him parry the rapier thrusts of critical rulers, out to entrap Him. They watched Him as he dealt with inquirers, discerning with piercing eye the honest and the hypocrites. They marvelled at His tenderness when the bruised and battered outcasts sought His help. They never forgot that day when He took a child and put His arms about him and set him in their midst. How could they forget? Theirs was a personal training, for the Master Himself was the clearest explanation of all they wanted to know.

He kept them so close to Nature. Try as hard as we will, we cannot find any trace of the artificial in Him. If, as Deissmann points out,[1] Paul was conspicuously a man of the city, Jesus was clearly a man of fields and country towns. He showed this not only in illustration and metaphor, but also

[1] "St. Paul," 74 *f.*

in sympathy and understanding. Israel's psalmists and prophets had always lived close to the mystery of wind and tree and flowery glade, and Jesus took His disciples into that country-side which He knew so well as a boy. As a respite from the commotion and excitement of developing ministry He would lead them to the hill country, where, in Alexander Whyte's phrase, they held their summer school of natural and revealed theology. Is it too great a stretch of imagination to picture the little group there among the highlands of northern Israel, singing psalms like the eighth or the nineteenth? Later on, they were to have enough of the crowded town, where formalism and soulless ritual were steadily crushing out the life of religion; here, where all things speak of God and His care, they could commune with the Spirit of all life. We have called their association with Jesus romantic and poetical, and in these days, when organization has gone to such lengths, when we have accumulated such a mass of intricate doctrine and speculation, it may not be without value to recall the simplicity of this early adven-

ture, its perfect accord with all that is natural, spontaneous, and noble.

It is worth while to reflect upon the simplicity of the tie which bound these men to Christ. They did not wear any special uniform or badge; the marks of their discipleship were internal not external. Their knowledge of "Christian Theology" was very rudimentary. To realize this it is only necessary to take a well-known creed like the Apostles', and ask how far these early followers of Jesus could have assented to its various articles. This old Roman Creed is an expansion of the trinitarian baptismal formula given in Matt. xxviii. 19, and contains many historic references which, in the nature of the case, the Twelve at the time could not know. Christ's birth of the Virgin Mary, His sufferings under Pontius Pilate, His crucifixion, death, and burial, His resurrection and ascension—these, with the exception of the first named, were as yet in the future. The interpretation of the many facts which centred in the person of Christ was a task which awaited the apostles at a later period, when, under the guidance of

the Holy Spirit, they were to set down the important conceptions of Him which were to form the basis of Christian theology. But at the time, when their life was activity and service rather than reflection, the great tie which bound them to Him was personal. He it was who drew them, even when they could not grasp all His teaching. He was the attraction, His Nature compelling and charming at the same time. If anyone had asked them: "What is the teaching that attracts you so strongly?" they could only have answered: "It isn't so much the teaching, it is the Master Himself; He draws us and we follow on." It was because they trusted Him that they believed what He said.

It required a great faith to follow Him in His methods and general policy. Doubtless He appeared at times to turn His back on really advantageous policies. Why should He withdraw Himself so often at the very moment when there seemed a chance of popular victory? Why could He not go out of His way, occasionally, to capture official support? Would it not have been wiser to have turned all this popular enthusiasm into

effect? After all, the people were ready for some spark to ignite their inflammatory zeal, and if He had come forward as a popular champion, might He not have gradually led them to the higher plane of truth? We cannot doubt that questions such as these laid hold upon the Twelve, and Christ's reserve, His deliberate avoidance of anything that savoured of mass enthusiasm, must have occasioned much perplexity in their minds. His intense spirituality of outlook and of method was difficult for them to attain, steeped as they were in Jewish tradition; yet they followed Him loyally. Let Him demand of them what He would, let Him lead them wherever He desired, they would follow, for they were following *Him*.

It is considerations such as these that increase our admiration for the little band. It is a much simpler matter for us, with many centuries of Christian thought and practice behind us, to declare our allegiance. We *know* how beneficial is His teaching; we can make up our minds in the shadow of a Cross and in the light of a Resurrection dawn; but for the Twelve it was a tre-

mendous demand on their personal loyalty. They were as yet on the threshold, and could not know what lay beyond. For them the future was uncertain; they were hazarding all, and at the call of One who did not receive wholehearted support even in His home. Thus at the very beginning of the Christian movement the world was clearly told what was the essential element in Christian discipleship. It was not to possess all knowledge or understand all mysteries, but to fall in love with Him, and because of what He was, to do what He said.

It is not surprising that the disciples, beginning with such a grand gesture of faith, went forth so valiantly to do the Master's will. A brief period of companionship—all too brief—and then they were called upon to carry on His work without His bodily presence. It is clear from the Gospels how much they missed Him when He went. The interval between His trial and condemnation and His resurrection was not long in time, but very tragic for His followers. None can blame them if they felt that all was lost. What other judgment could be made, in

view of appearances? Their Master dead, and His death apparently ignominious, what could happen to the movement? The critics who had said, "This burst of idealism will soon play itself out," were apparently right. The Temple still remained; Scribes and Pharisees still went their accustomed way; some other had taken Matthew's place, and Roman administration still went on. The Cross, after all, was only one of three, and why should the middle cross mean any more than the others? And, to add to it all, there had been treachery within the camp. The Eleven could not forget about Judas, but none cared to mention his name. Truly it was a steep descent from those happy days when, on the northern hills, they had dreamed the Master's dreams. But every cloud passes in time, and their cloud of disappointment and failure gave way to a burst of light so piercing and powerful that their eyes could hardly bear it. Incredulous, they heard the news. Excited, they passed it on. Revived, they set out again, in the power of a Risen Lord, to do the things He had commanded them.

It is interesting to follow them on their great adventure. Even a casual reader of the Acts of the Apostles cannot fail to be impressed by their enthusiastic vigour. They did not at once drop all their insularity and narrowness, but an impartial critic must admit that they rose grandly to a great occasion. In a sense it was the opportunity that made them—that, and their strong conviction of the living Lordship of Christ. We see them gathered in Jerusalem with a strong sense of their responsibility. Bravely they face the fact of their loss through the defection of Judas, and they choose one to take his place. Peter takes the lead, and in his vigorous preaching sets out the truth for which they stand—"God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." Peter had at last come into his own, and was beginning to justify the Master's confidence in him. Shortly there came an addition to the ranks that none could have foreseen—Saul of Tarsus. He was too big a man to fit easily into the scheme, and we must not be surprised when we read of friction here and there. Though

they had a Divine commission, these men did not cease to be human; and if the marks of their humanity are scattered occasionally in the pages of Acts, is not that itself a tribute to the essential veracity of the record? They are still capable of argument among themselves; they do not all see their commission in the same light; but when the need arises every man is in his place, and the work of evangelism goes steadily on.

The story of these early years is the story of missionary enterprise. Philip heard the call to proclaim the Gospel in Samaria, and then in the south. Paul heard a thousand calls to every point of the compass, and the greater part of Acts is devoted to the story of his response to those calls. Christian writers have scoured vocabularies to find adjectives fit to describe this man; he himself had a very vivid and descriptive vocabulary, but he sometimes had to play strange tricks with language to express the inexpressible urge within him. From his first venture to Cyprus down to his last valiant residence in Rome he pursued his missionary career, and by now his indomitable spirit

and tireless zeal are known wherever the New Testament is read.

It is very easy to criticise the little groups of people who, under apostolic influence, formed the first churches. There is no attempt in the New Testament to hide their weakness. They were guilty of faction and party spirit; excesses did sometimes mar their observance of solemn sacraments; they often failed to carry the true Christian spirit into the common practice of the moral life. But before we criticise them too harshly, let us remember the conditions under which they lived, and what a revolution of ideas was brought in by the Christian Gospel. Paul's critics, as far as any man could then see, were not unjustified. It certainly did seem an absurd thing to put confidence in such a movement, when its Founder had apparently come to such an ignominious end, when its advocates were so lacking in social prestige, when its tenets seemed to reverse the established principles of the vast paganism of the Roman empire. Moreover, the new movement was anything but stable. Its first advocates were then busy dis-

entangling stable truth from unstable error. Organization had to be effected, and in the meantime, mistakes were inevitable. On the whole, therefore, the conditions of life among these early groups are a tribute to the men who had taken up the Master's challenge and carried it into the heart of paganism.

Whatever men might say about the new religion they could not deny that it changed lives for the better. Later in the development of the movement, when, in response to attacks, Christian writers began to set forth their apologies, we find an exultant emphasis on this. We cannot read Tertullian, for example, without feeling that he was ready, if need be, to base his position entirely on the fine moral effect of the Christian religion. The fact was plain; men were finding a new meaning for this life and a new hope for the next. There was the slave, for example, and the temple woman. What could paganism do for these? We know what the religion of Jesus had to offer, and what a difference it made. "To be redeemed by the Son of God gave the slave a new self-respect, a new manhood. He astonished

people by his truth, his honesty, his cleanness; and there was a new brightness and gaiety about him.'"[1] These were early fruits of the movement which was to spread with such rapidity and bring greater and greater honour to its first advocates.

Further, we owe these men an immense debt for their literary records. In these days, when copies of the New Testament, translated into so many languages, are so cheap, we are in danger of forgetting their vital importance. To gauge their real effect and importance we need to inquire on the mission fields, and find what it means to a convert when, for the first time, the record of our Lord's earthly life is set before him. We cannot conceive Christian history at all without such literary sources. Fundamentally the Christian religion is an historic faith, rooted in a definite manifestation of God in terms of human experience and on the common plains of life. The Gospels are written with a simplicity and a plainness which not only guarantee their historicity,

[1] Glover, "Jesus of History," p. 214.

but also increase their power upon the reader. These reminiscences, fragments that survive out of the wealthy intercourse with Christ that the disciples enjoyed, divinely inspired, carry us back to those memorable days, and enable us, though after many centuries, to reconstruct the beginnings of our faith. The writers, in Glover's phrase, are collectors and transmitters, but behind them is first-hand experience (Peter, *e.g.*, behind Mark), actual contact with the living facts. And if we turn to the Epistles we gain valuable insight not only into the early attempts to expound the implications of Christ, but also into the environment, the difficulties of thought and life, in which the early Church was called upon to bear her witness.

On one occasion Jesus put a great question to James and John, the sons of Zebedee: "Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Doubtless at the time the full meaning of this quiet question was not realized, but ere the day of the disciples was over, some of them were to show the world

that they could follow their Master even unto death. On this note we may fittingly close our study of these men. It is difficult to pierce the mists that surround the final career of the disciples, to know when legend speaks or when fact; but some things are clear. Acts tells us that Herod Agrippa I. killed James, the brother of John, with the sword, threatening at the same time to seize Peter. Eusebius,[1] relying upon Clement of Alexandria, says that the man who led James to the judgment seat was so impressed by his bearing that he too decided to embrace the Faith. Whether this is true or not, it is certainly prophetic of what was to happen, not infrequently, in the later days of martyrdom. The date and circumstances of Peter's death are uncertain. One old record says that Peter saw his wife suffer first, a victim of Nero's cruelty. "Then was the blessed Peter glad because she had been called, and was now going home. So he lifted up his voice, and cried to her in an encouraging voice, addressing her by name and saying,

[1] "Ecclesiastical History," ii. 9.

'O thou, remember the Lord' . . . an indication of their perfect love, comments Clement of Alexandria."[1] Of Peter himself it is said that he was persuaded to flee from the persecution, but that he returned and honoured his Lord in death. The story is not of unquestioned historicity, but it represents so clearly the real spirit of Peter that it may be given here. Fleeing from Rome, Peter hastened along the Appian Way in the dead of night.

Doubts, like a swarm of gnats, o'erhung his flight,
And "Lord," he prayed, "have I not done aright?
Can I not, living, more avail for Thee
Than whelmed in yon red storm of agony?"

Then, as he hastened on, there came a vision:

Lo, on the darkness brake a wandering ray:
A vision flashed along the Appian Way.
Divinely in the pagan night it shone—
A mournful Face—a Figure hurrying on—
Though haggard and dishevelled, frail and worn,
A king, of David's lineage, crowned with thorn.
"Lord, whither farest?" Peter, wondering cried.
"To Rome," said Christ, "to be re-crucified."

[1] Quoted in Eusebius, iii. 30.

Into the night the vision ebbed like breath;
And Peter turned and rushed on Rome and death.[1]

At his own request he was crucified head downwards, as unworthy to suffer in the same manner as his Lord.

We need not venture further into this realm of apostolic courage. It is sufficient to note that this little group of men who knew the Master were captured by Him, and in His Name went out to win the kingdoms of the world for their Lord. It was the beginning of the Christian missionary enterprise which was to carry the Church, through failure and through glory, into vast areas of human darkness and human need.

[1] William Watson, "Odes and other Poems," p. 40 *f.*

CHAPTER II

THE MEN WHO WOULD NOT BOW TO CÆSAR

If anyone is anxious to write the story of Christian adventure during the first three centuries he cannot do better than group his material around the two great names, Christ and Cæsar. These names, shining like suns in the firmament of that day, represented the two spheres in which a Christian man was called upon to live, and the two loyalties to which he was drawn. The one Name stood for the Kingdom of God, that spiritual commonwealth whose principles Jesus had enunciated in so memorable a fashion; the other stood for the empire of Rome, strong and vast, embracing in its wide range all sorts of nationalities and religions.

At first there was no apparent conflict between these two loyalties. Had not Jesus said in the plainest possible fashion: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's"? Nor was there in His

ministry any indication of anti-Roman propaganda. He did not make any direct and definite criticism of the social and political order of His day. He conveyed the impression of accepting the established political order, and within it of urging the basic principles of the new spiritual kingdom. Moreover, the Apostle Paul more than once, either definitely or by implication, declared his pride in the empire. He was proud of his citizenship; his final appeal to Rome reveals his confidence in Roman justice; and it is clear that on many occasions when beset by Jewish persecutors he had found a friend in Rome. The spread of the Gospel was made easier by those lines of communication which Roman military exploits and Roman encouragement of commerce had firmly established.

It was not long, however, before the inevitable conflict between the two loyalties became a practical concern. None who thought deeply about the first principles of the new faith could fail to see their ultimate meaning; they might begin quietly enough, in the sphere of personal and private life,

but they were bound in the end to conflict with the established order. There was a plain hint of this in the words of Jesus: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves . . . beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you; yea, and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for My sake. . . ." The trouble came, in the first place, from the Jews, as Paul found to his cost. But as soon as the Christian movement began to spread, Jewish persecution was supplemented and then superseded by Roman persecution. It is in the light of this that such Christian watchwords as "overcome" and the promises to him "that endureth to the end" acquire a vivid meaning. The last book in the New Testament bears on its pages clear evidence that it was written in a time when the Church was passing through the flames. The inspired dreamer knew of a Church that apparently was in danger of being stamped out, but he saw a Church triumphant . . . thousands of thousands in victorious homage before the Lamb,

while Roman greatness lay crumbled in the dust.

Consider how inevitable was the conflict. On the one hand, a small but vital growing Church; on the other, a mighty world empire. It is sufficient to set a few of the conflicting principles and practices side by side to realize the gulf between the two systems. The Christian believed in one God and Father, in the elevation of God above all human rulers, in the rule of love, in the freedom and worth of every individual; and his true worship was to be pure and undefiled. On the other hand, the religious practice of the empire countenanced a pantheon of gods, with room for more. It stood for the sway of force, acknowledged an order of slavery, and engaged in religious practices which often included immoral and obscene rites. Between these two schemes there could, in the nature of the case, be no compromise. For the Christian, at any rate, it could only be Cæsar *or* Christ.

It was difficult for the Roman to understand this point of view. Why could not these Christians fall into line with others?

There were plenty of religions in the empire already, and one more or less would not matter much, provided that it did not conflict with the political basis of the empire. It is quite clear from this that the officials of the empire did not understand the new religion . . . not a surprising thing when we realize how much the new faith was misrepresented. Tertullian in his "Apology" had to meet the complaint that Christians, in their secret gatherings, were guilty of child-sacrifice: "monsters of wickedness, we are accused of observing a holy rite in which we kill a little child and then eat it"[1] . . . followed by shameless practices. Rumours quickly spread, and the idea gained ground that these meetings of Christians were somehow connected with illicit clubs, and therefore were really a menace to the power and genius of the empire. This last suggestion goes to the root of the matter, for religion, to the Roman, was largely a matter of patriotism. Such toleration as was afforded was based, not on high ethical

[1] "Apology," para. 7.

grounds, but on practical grounds of policy; the concern was not about the souls of men, but about the welfare of the empire.

Gradually the emperor came to be acknowledged as God. Domitian ordered all official proclamations to begin with formulæ recognizing his deity. On the death of Tiberius eleven cities of Asia struggled for the honour of erecting a temple to his memory. This emperor-worship spread from Asia into every part of the empire, our own Colchester, for example, possessing its own temple to Claudius. Marcus Aurelius, that "good Stoic but very bad emperor," insisted that every Christian should sacrifice to the emperor, and Decius issued a formal edict to this effect. The test, therefore, was quite simple: every year on the emperor's name day there was a festival in every province; on these occasions the Christian was required to make the declaration, "Cæsar is Lord," and this, with an altar and the usual emblems, completed the sacrifice that was necessary. What could be simpler? The only drawback was that this was the very thing a conscientious Christian

could not do. He could only say "Christ is Lord," and his faith did not allow of any loyalty which threatened the supremacy of Christ. To other citizens of the empire it might mean little enough; to the followers of Jesus it meant everything to preserve for Christ the unique and commanding place. They could not consent to have an emblem of Christ placed on a shelf in the pantheon, to have the Saviour classed as one among a host of other deities. He claimed their complete allegiance; there was not a part of their lives over which He did not rule; to engage in emperor-worship or to reduce the Son of God to the level of the pantheon was to betray that solemn trust which the strong faith of the Apostolic Church had committed to them. So it happened that "for two hundred years the leaders among the Christians were branded as anarchists and atheists, and hated accordingly . . . for two hundred years (broadly) to become a Christian meant the great renunciation, the joining a despised and persecuted sect, the swimming against the tide of popular prejudice, the coming under the ban of the

Empire, the possibility at any moment of imprisonment and death under its most fearful forms."[1] It was a time of great testing, and the Christian movement owes more than it can easily acknowledge to the brave men and women who would not bow to Cæsar.

It is possible to exaggerate both the extent and the nature of these persecutions. "There is no day in the whole year" wrote Jerome, "unto which the number of five thousand martyrs cannot be ascribed, except only the first of January." Eusebius tells us that in the persecution in the Thebais so many martyrs were sacrificed that "the weapons of the murderers were completely blunted."[2] The medieval Church delighted in legends which pictured enormous companies of Christians paying the extreme price for their loyalty to Christ. But we are on safer ground when we rely on the investigations of careful historians like Workman, who writes: "We may grant that the outbreak of persecution in systematic form was

[1] Workman, "Persecution in the Early Church," p. 103.

[2] Quoted in Workman, p. 199 *f.*

an infrequent occurrence, depending chiefly on local circumstances of popular feeling, on the zeal, superstition, or humanity of the district magistrates. There were, however, seasons of special activity in persecutions—enumerated by the early Church as ten in all—when the hatred against the Christians burst forth, not locally, but over wide areas."[1]

Readers who are interested in the tracing of these persecutions, from the memorable days of Nero down to the time when the conversion of Constantine ushered in a brighter day, may be referred to the histories. Our special concern here is to examine the attitude of Christ's followers in this time of stress, to note the manner in which they played their difficult part, venturing all for Him whom they loved and served.

Were they all faithful even unto death? We recall our Lord's parable of the seed which fell on rocky ground. "Straightway they sprang up . . . but when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they

[1] "Persecution," p. 201.

had no root they withered away." There is evidence that some were unable to stand the test. Cyprian, who wrote about those who "lapsed," declares "many of our brethren, vanquished before the fight, did not make even a show of sacrificing under compulsion. They ran of their own accord to the Forum, as if they were indulging a long-cherished desire. There you could see them entreating the magistrates to receive their recantations, although it was already night."[1] It was possible to purchase a certificate of sacrifice from easy-going magistrates, and some managed by bribery to slip past the altar without actual sacrifice. Some sent their Christian slaves to represent them at the sacrifice. That the number of those who failed to stand the test is by no means inconsiderable is shown by the fact that a controversy developed around the question, "What are we to do with those who have lapsed from the steadfast faith?" It is an easy matter to condemn these weaker brethren. But let us

[1] "De Lapsis," 8.

bear in mind the acute agony of their position, and how smooth and easy was the path to recantation. Better to turn to the greater host who did not fail, and think for a moment of those who gave up their all for Christ.

It is difficult, in these days of easy tolerance, to grasp the vivid horror of their situation. To hold fast to the Christian Name was not merely to suffer social ostracism and daily sneers or taunts; it was, in many cases, to endure acts of savagery the mere recital of which is appalling. The Roman citizen, of course, could claim to be sent to the capital, and if death was his portion he could meet it at the hands of the headsman. But for the rest there was a catalogue of tortures and savage cruelties which will not bear a too-literal survey. To be shut up in a sack with snakes and thrown into the sea; to be thrown to the beasts, or, enclosed in nets, to be exposed to the attacks of furious bulls . . . these, with the rack, the hobby-horse, the claws, and other forms of torture, indicate the kind of fate awaiting those who dared to keep their faith

unto the end. We are reminded of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews with its record of endurance and sufferings nobly borne.

But if the record of these tortures is too terrible to dwell upon, the story of Christian endurance is one of the most inspiring and heartening of all time. We gain some idea of the spirit of the martyrs from that brave word of the suffering Maximus of Ephesus: as he lay stretched upon the hobby-horse, . . . "Sufferings borne for the Name are not torments, but soothing ointments." Of others it is recorded: "When the day of victory dawned, the Christians marched in procession from the prison to the arena as if they were marching to Heaven, with joyous countenances agitated by gladness rather than fear." One Carpus, nailed upon a cross, was seen to smile. "What makes you smile?" they asked him; "I saw the glory of the Lord and was glad," was his brave reply. Satirical critics of the Christian faith, like Lucian, bear witness to the Christian contempt of death, and Diocletian, who had many opportunities of knowing, could declare: "As a rule, the

Christians are only too happy to die." It is simple fact that these valiant martyrs faced torture with a smile and greeted the Unseen with a cheer. We do not wonder that the exultant Tertullian could write: "O blessed martyrs, you have gone out of prison rather than into one. . . . Your dungeon is full of darkness, but ye yourselves are light; it has bonds, but God hath made you free."[1] Cyprian wrote: "These are not chains, they are ornaments. O fettered feet of the blessed ones, treading the path to Paradise! You have no bed, no place of rest in the mines; your wearied limbs are stretched on the cold earth; naked, there are no clothes to cover you; hungry, no bread to feed you. But what a glory lights up this your shame!"[2] And, not long after, Cyprian himself was to pay the extreme penalty for his loyalty to Christ.

It can easily be imagined that, under such conditions, the Christian witness would produce a deep impression. From the torture chamber, from the arena packed in its

[1] "Ad Marturas," 2.
[2] "Epistle," 76, 2.

terraced tiers with crowds of pagan holiday-makers, from the trial chamber of the magistrates, rose the fatal cry, "Christianus sum," and even from the theatre, that least likely place of Christian testimony. As a rule the theatre pandered to the amusement of the crowd, and the hopes and sacred rites of Christians provided a popular subject for jest and mimicry; but once, at least, the mimicry changed to serious confession, and they who had applauded the antics of a jester were driven to silence by the work of Grace.

It happened to an actor named Genesius, little known apart from his martyrdom, but, through a remarkable conversion, an outstanding and dramatic example of Christian heroism even in those times of widespread bravery. In the presence of Diocletian, Genesius was playing his part upon the stage, pouring ridicule upon the Christian mysteries. Doubtless he had played the part before, and his sallies never failed to draw the laughter of the crowd, There he lay upon the stage, a caricature of a priest by his side, making a pantomime of Christian experience. How

they roared! "I want to receive the Grace of Christ, that I may be born again," cried the actor, "I want to be set free from the sins which have been my ruin." More laughter, loud and prolonged! There was even a mock baptism, and the crowd still thought he was jesting. But in the heart of this poor mime a great power was at work, as if the voice of Christ had arrested all his poor buffoonery. Some new light was breaking on his soul; he could make no more parodies, and there and then, before the crowd, emperor as well, he declared: "Illustrious emperor, and all you people who have laughed so loudly at this parody, believe me: Christ is the true Lord."

It took them some time to realize that he was in earnest. When at last it was realized, they stretched him on the hobby-horse, but even in torture he kept repeating: "There is no king except Christ, whom I have seen and worship. For Him I will die a thousand times. I am sorry for my sin, and for becoming so late a soldier of the true King."[1] At last he was beheaded . . .

[1] Workman, "Persecution," 288 *f.*

truly an eleventh hour conversion . . . but without doubt an impressive testimony to the power of the Name. Is it too much to suggest that many who came to that spectacle to jeer and laugh, passed homewards in serious thought?

There is evidence in the writings of Justin Martyr that the Christian endurance was not without its effect. "I myself," he wrote, "when I was contented with the doctrines of Plato, and heard the Christians slandered, yet saw them fearless of death and of everything that men count terrible, felt that it was impossible that these men could be living, as was reputed, in wickedness and mere pleasure."[1] And there is the case of the young officer of the court in attendance on Galerius.[2] He was so impressed by the bearing of Christians under examination that he asked them the secret of their courage. On the next occasion of their examination he threw in his lot with them. "Are you mad?" inquired the astonished Galerius.

[1] "II. Apology," 12.
[2] Workman, 346 *f.*

"Not mad," was the reply; "mad once, but now in my right mind." Through many tortures he won his martyr's crown.

Looking back on those stirring times through the mists of many centuries we are apt to lose something of their vivid and dramatic character. Legend, of course, has exaggerated both the nature and the extent of martyr-sufferings, while the mere passing of time works a mellowing effect on a picture that once was painted in a stark and grim realism. But nothing can obscure the essential value of this great spirit of renunciation, nor minimise our Christian debt to those whose endurance is written on the page of Church history in letters of blood. Admittedly, at the time there was extravagance even in this self-renunciation. It cannot be denied that followers of Christ even courted death, exalting martyrdom into "the one royal road to perfection." And the great respect paid by the Church to her martyrs tended to develop into a practice of veneration which forgot the spirituality of the first emphasis. It is common knowledge that the Church came to venerate relics of

the martyrs, attributing to hair and bones and similar objects a power that can only be described as superstitious. But if we dwell on these things unduly, or ponder too long over the many cases of failure under persecution, we fail to do justice to the spirit of loyalty and renunciation which did so much to purify the Church. The men who refused to sacrifice to Cæsar had a definite and heroic thing to say to the world, and if their theology and their philosophy were expressed in suffering and action rather than in abstract treatise and pamphlet, they were no less powerful and effective on that account. Their refusal to buy a compromise declares not only what they thought about the empire of Cæsar, but also what they thought about the empire of Christ. To renounce "the world" was to exalt the Christian ideal of life, and the more we examine their ideal the more we feel that, for them, the Christian life was essentially an adventure and a romance.

It was an adventure made possible by a belief in a real and living Lord. Nothing less could have aroused such devotion and

sustained it. Men do not go to such lengths for the sake of a bare principle; the Roman empire did not lack excellent moral teachers, but we do not find anything in the paganism of the time to compare with the Christian endurance. When a Christian soldier, Nicander, arrived at the place of execution, his wife was brought to his side. Said Nicander, "God be with you," and the wife replied, "Be of good cheer." It takes more than intellectual assent to a scheme of moral principles to induce such courageous and genial bearing as this. When men and women are torn from the very bosom of their families and willingly give up all that they hold dear, we must seek for some compelling motive, some dynamic that cannot be resisted. And here, as in the case of the men who knew the Master, we find a strong sense of the reality of the Person of Christ. It was not a carefully thought-out system of theology that sent men and women to an early death, but a passionate loyalty to a Person whom they knew to be real. He, too, had trodden the painful way, and there was a fellowship in His sufferings that could

never be understood save by those who enjoyed it. As for the path to martyrdom—

> It was the way the Master went,
> Should not the servant tread it still?

While, therefore, we do not look to the martyrs for an elaborate creed, there is one strong belief that emerges and takes practical form . . . the belief in immortality. It took practical form, for it was this strong conviction that helped them all along the tortured way and through the arena or the flames to the Other Side. What did it matter? The severing of earth's dear ties, the closing of the eye of sense, good-bye to father or mother or wife or child . . . these were but for a moment, and the Saviour was the guarantee of happy reunion. It was an adventure, more dangerous perhaps than romantic, unless one can find romance in danger itself. For these Christians there was no happy converse with the Master such as the Twelve had enjoyed on the northern hills of Palestine. Their converse with Him was in the secret places of the heart, or behind closed doors. To say "Christ is Lord," and to mean it, was to

open the way to all manner of uncertainty. The slave in the household, the soldier in the ranks, the man of commerce pursuing his daily trade . . . it was hourly uncertainty for them all. Informers lurked in every quarter, caring for nothing save the price of betrayal. What will to-morrow bring forth? None of them knew; they could but live the day as it came, and pray that if the hour of testing arrived they might be found faithful.

In such an atmosphere these men and women played their part in the spread of the Gospel. Once again the essentially missionary character of that Gospel was made plain to the world. Pagan zealots or Roman patriots who thought they could stamp out the new movement were reckoning without the essential spirit and genius of the Christian faith. It was born that it might grow. God within it guaranteed its final triumph. "The more men multiply our sufferings," cried Justin, "the more does the number of the faithful grow." "Dying, we conquer," boasted Tertullian, and it was a pardonable boast, because based

on fact. Histories of these early centuries tell us that in the year 313 there was issued the Edict of Milan, which restored to Christians their civil and religious rights. Lands and buildings were to be given back to the Christian Church, and Christianity became a recognized religion throughout the empire. The cause of the emperor and the cause of Christ were identified. On his campaigns Constantine gave prominence to the Christian religion; his flag bore a Greek monogram of Christ; bishops marched with his army . . . a new day for the Church had dawned. It was not the end of problems for the Church, as we shall see. Imperial recognition did not bring unmingled blessings. But it was the end of a period of great strain and testing. The Church could now breathe freely and hold up its head without fear. The "pale Galilean" had undermined the very foundations of paganism, and by the splendid witness of His followers, the ideals of Christ and His Cross had taken firm root in the soil of the world.

CHAPTER III

THE MEN WHO FORSOOK THE WORLD

We are now to consider a type of Christian enterprise which may well be described as an adventure in isolation. We have seen how the apostles followed their Lord along the lanes and highways of Palestine, and then along the broad roads of Asia Minor, bearing their testimony with voice and pen and life. We have seen, further, how the martyrs, urged by that inner call in which they clearly heard the voice of God, ventured all and made the great renunciation that the Faith might stand. So far the Christian witness has been borne wherever men congregate, in home, in market place, in busy town and crowded city and tented field. The Christian standard has been erected in the midst of the world, and the preacher's voice has been heard high above that conglomeration of discordant sounds that make up the song of life. The attitude of the apostles was: "The world is

around us, we live in it, let us capture it for Christ." The martyrs said: "The world is strong, and draws us to compromise and man-worship and the lowering of the flag; let us show, even by death, that we esteem the reproach of Christ better riches than the glory of a Roman empire." Now, however, we meet a new attitude; old indeed, as oriental religions go, but new as a considerable movement within the Christian development. We are to think of men and women who thought they could best serve Christ by withdrawal from the world and all that it involved. The ascetics and the monastics call for our attention, that we may examine the meaning of their own special response to the call of Christ and estimate its value.

Their movement may be broadly described as a protest against worldliness in the Church. It has often been observed that prosperity brings with it many and acute dangers; nowhere is this more evident than in the history of religion. One of the really important things to notice about the history of the Christian Church is that when

men and women had to fight for their religion, facing all manner of persecution, their general spirit was pure. But when things became easier, when persecution died down, there began a serious decline in spirituality. At the close of the last chapter we left the Christian movement enjoying its hard-earned and newly found status of recognition. The emperor himself had embraced the Christian faith, and his court naturally followed, at least officially, in the same path. Wherever the Roman eagle went, there went the Christian Cross. All the resources of a great empire were at the disposal of the Church, and there was a rich promise that Christ, firmly established in the heart of the empire, was at last on the way to universal triumph.

In course of time, however, discerning men saw that the outward prosperity of the Church was an evidence more apparent than real. Clear and noble truth was giving way to convenient custom; the firm integrity of those men and women who had suffered for their Faith was giving way to a lower standard of life; the simplicity of apostolic

theology was being replaced by systems of philosophy which the Church was trying to assimilate. Christians had once surrendered life itself for the Cause; now their zeal was consumed in bitter and unseemly struggles for the prizes which the Church had to offer. A pagan historian of the time describes a successful candidate for a bishopric as "sure of being enriched by the offerings of nations; of riding about in carriages through the streets of Rome as soon as his dress is composed with becoming care and elegance; and of giving banquets so profuse and elegant that their entertainments shall surpass the sumptuousness of the imperial tables."[1] Allowing for the bitter satire of this writer, there is still too much that is true in the description. The Christian Basil wrote: "The doctrines of the Fathers are despised, the speculations of inventors hold sway in the Church. The wisdom of this world has the place of honour, having dispossessed the boasting of

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, quoted in Workman, "The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal," p. 9.

the Cross. The shepherds are driven out; in their place grievous wolves are brought in which harry the flock. Houses of prayer have none to assemble in them; the deserts are full of mourners."[1] Beyond doubt, imperial recognition of the Christian religion had brought many evils in its train. And anyone who cared to compare the current Christianity with the simple faith and life of those who first followed Christ could not avoid the conclusion that, hard as it was to bear the flames and the torture, it was harder still to bear the tolerance and the smile of worldly thrones.

It was clear that a revival was needed, a spiritual revival to cleanse the Church and set her more nearly in accord with the will of her Lord. There were many who raised their voices within the Church, trying by their fidelity to effect an improvement. But our concern now is with those who took the important and decisive step of leaving the Church to seek a purer faith and life in desert, cave, or on mountain-top—anywhere, so long as it was away from "the world,"

[1] "Epistle," 90.

So it happened that for nearly a thousand years no historian could do justice to the development of the Christian ideal without taking some account of Monasticism, and all that term involved.

This particular discipleship was essentially a protest, a lay protest against growing corruption in the Church. Its strength and enthusiasm lay outside the Church, though the Church was not slow to take advantage of its witness. Long before we have finished our survey of the movement we shall find ourselves wondering what might have happened if all this enthusiasm and consecration had been operative within, instead of without, the Catholic Church.

The protest took two main forms: there was the yearning for isolation which drove men (and later, women) into inaccessible deserts, away from the noise of life, that they might seek holy things; as a natural development of this there grew up small communities wherein austerities were practised in the simplicity of a common life. This later type developed into the monastic system.

The yearning for simplicity of life was by no means a new thing. In all ages of religious thought there appear emphases on this; it is the continual action and reaction between the life of spirit and the life of organization. The Old Testament, for example, shows how a nation can fall into laxity of life and needs to be recalled to simplicity and purity, and movements like that connected with the Nazarites are significant because of their emphasis on this need. All through the long course of Christian history we can trace protests against low standards and devitalized Church life. The problem may arise in different forms in different periods, but it is essentially the same problem . . . the safeguarding of the interests of the spirit amid the many enticements of the world. The ascetic movement which we are now to consider takes a prominent place because of its excesses, and because it led to the powerful and highly organized monastic system which was such a prominent feature of the religious life of the Middle Ages.

To the modern Western mind the life of

the anchorites (as the ascetics who sought absolute solitude were called) inevitably appears strange. Our age owes much to scientific investigation, and what we may call the biological approach to the study of human life has succeeded in counteracting that disparagement of the body and all things physical which was so strong a feature of earlier Christian thought and practice. A sane and true study of the New Testament will place the body in a noble and exalted place. We realize that although bodily passions form a very ready channel along which evil forces may operate, the body itself plays such an important part in the life of man that it ought to be consecrated, as Paul argued, and made fit for the habitation of the Holy Spirit. But in the period with which we are concerned the Church was largely under the influence of Greek thought, and, as is well known, it was ever the delight of the Greek mind to exalt the spirit at the expense of the body.

This is precisely what the ascetics endeavoured to do. This is the explanation

of their severe practices and their removal from those social spheres where bodily considerations are so important. The typical ascetic of the East, and probably the most famous, was Symeon Stylites. He seems to have begun his career by dwelling for forty days in a cave, with his right leg fastened to a stone by an iron chain. At another period he used to dig a trench in the garden and, during the heat of summer, bury himself daily up to the head. His strangest act was to establish himself on the top of a pillar, gradually raised from four to forty cubits; there he lived, doubtless chained to the top, for thirty-seven years.

His fame spread throughout the East, and it became fashionable to make pilgrimages to this pillar-saint. We are told that his admirers looked on in awe while he touched his feet with his forehead 1,244 times, or stood all night motionless with his hands stretched out to heaven. Many others copied his practices, as a succession of pillar-saints shows. Another zealous ascetic passed ten years in a tub, suspended in mid-air from poles. Some buried themselves in

dark caves, or chose to live in sandy wastes where water could not easily be found. In the records of these men we find a general denial of the normal means of sustenance, especially in Egypt. There were many who never partook of food until sunset, while some never drank save on rare occasions. It is recorded of a Cilician hermit that for thirty years he had but one meal a week. Pachomius is said to have slept upright in the middle of his cell . . . a practice he continued for fifteen years.

It is easy to smile at such excesses as these and to ask: "However could such practices aid the cause of the Kingdom?" But we do well to remember that these are the expression of a spiritual resolution. However absurd the action may appear, especially to a Western mind, the motive was usually praiseworthy. "What does it profit," asks the healthy-minded Christian of to-day, "to stand on one leg for several hours, or forsake the bath, or ignore the normal laws of health?" The answer is to be sought, not in a criticism of the practice, but in an estimate of the intention behind

it; and that intention, clearly, was to subdue those forces which the anchorites considered to be opposed to the higher life. They remembered Paul's phrase: "I keep under my body," without understanding Paul's true conception of human nature. However misguided we may consider their peculiar expression of piety to have been, we cannot withhold admiration for their fortitude and devotion to their ideal. Moreover, it is incorrect to think that a tale of absurd physical excesses completes the story. Some of these men could make valuable contributions to the theology of their time. In many cases they revealed a spirit of service which it is delightful to recall. Dr. Workman, in his scholarly and fascinating book, "The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal" (to which all students of this movement owe a great debt) has recorded several cases which we may note here. We hear of one Macarius, a jeweller in his youth, who erected a hospital. When visited by a miserly woman of Alexandria he offered to give her of his jewels. "Which do you wish to see first," he asked, "my jacinths or my emeralds?"

Then he showed her his lepers: "Behold my jacinths." Afterwards he took her to his cripples: "See my emeralds." There was another Macarius, of Alexandria, of whom two incidents are recorded. One day he was stung by a gnat, and in his anger he killed it. Feeling that he had lost a fine chance of showing the true spirit in time of affliction, he deliberately lived for six months in the marshes of the Nile near Scete, all the time maddened by gnats. On another occasion he was offered a bunch of grapes by a traveller. We can imagine how tempting such a gift would be, especially to one who had made such extreme denials. But he conquered his longing to taste them, and handed them to the first hermit he could find who was hard at work. He, like Macarius, would have enjoyed the fruit, but he, also, thinking of others, passed the grapes on to another. And so they were handed round from one to another, until they eventually came back again to Macarius himself! It would be difficult to find a more delightful example of selflessness than this. The spirit which drove

to ascetic absurdities could also lead to benevolence and brotherliness.

The ultimate development of this yearning for isolation and of these ascetic excesses was monasticism as an institution. We leave the story of isolated or comparatively isolated hermits to take up the story of those groups of enthusiasts which, organized in a common life, grew into the rich and powerful monasteries of later Christendom. It is in Egypt that we first find examples of this more organized renunciation, and the story of Pachomius,[1] the founder of the cenobite movement in Egypt, will illustrate the main aims and practices. He had been a soldier, but, dissatisfied with his life, he turned away from the world that he might find peace. After his conversion he was baptized, and for some years lived with an anchorite named Palæmon. We infer that during this period he learned the drawbacks attending the isolated life, for he took three disciples and eventually established a monastery, destined to grow

[1] Dates of his life uncertain; perhaps born 292, died 346.

into a group of nine monasteries. Pachomius is important as marking this important development from the life of the hermit to the more organized life of the groups. In him, also, we see the movement extending to women, for his sister Mary influenced him to organize two monasteries for women. The temper of the times was evidently favourable for this specific form of renunciation, for we find that by the end of the fourth century monasteries for both sexes abounded in Italy, whence the movement spread all over Western Christendom.

Workman attributes the remarkable growth of monasticism in the fourth and fifth centuries to the influence of two biographies, "The Life of St. Anthony"[1] and "The Life of St. Martin."[2] Anthony, from his youth in possession of a large fortune, gave away the greater part of it to the poor and devoted his energies to toil and renunciation, living the life of a hermit. The stories of his battles with evil thoughts produced

[1] Born about 251 in Egypt.

[2] Born about 336 in Pannonia, now part of Hungary.

a great effect on the impressionable minds of the time, full as they were of dread of evil powers. The story of Martin was read in Rome, in Egypt, in cultured Athens. For five years he served with the army in Northern Gaul, and continued in that profession for two years after his baptism. He left the army to embrace the monastic life, and during his lifetime attained a great popularity, which continued after his death. In Italy, Spain, and France, churches were dedicated to his name, and many were the would-be-saints who began their career by visiting his tomb. It was such stories of really noble lives that inflamed the zeal of young Christians of both sexes, pointing out the monastic way as the true path of Christian service.

We cannot do justice to this movement without paying some attention to its organization and its various Rules, for it is these which indicate the real aims of the movement. The specifically Western type of monasticism owed much to the work of Benedict of Nursia.[1] The Western mind

[1] Born probably 480, died 543.

did not look with favour on sheer individualism, and had little place for any movement which did not issue in practical ways. Benedict was perturbed by the corruptions he saw around him in Rome and began his religious life at the age of twenty by retiring to a cave. For three years he practised lonely austerities, but soon his fame as a young saint attracted disciples, whom he formed into twelve communities of twelve, with a prior at the head of each. By the year 529 he had formulated his famous Rule, his aim being to form "a school of divine servitude." For fifteen years he was able to watch over the growing adherents to his cause, and his life was such that devoted followers wrote this inscription on the old Roman tower at Monte Cassino where he dwelt: "He saw the world and scorned it." Within two hundred years the Order Benedict had penetrated into every land of the West. The establishment of a large number of new communities in every land had a tremendous effect. Benedictine monasteries marked the progress of the Christian cause against heathenism, for the conspicuous

feature of the Order was its missionary enthusiasm. The barefooted monk, with the cord around his waist, became the symbol of the Church missionary; dangers of unknown wastes and heathen bandits were as nothing to these men, who fearlessly flung the boundaries of the Christian cause wider and wider in all directions. Regions which Roman legionaries had traversed with difficulty fell before the untiring zeal and enthusiasm of the monks.

Benedict, with his genius for organization, had been able to incorporate "into one organic whole the successes and failures that had preceded (him), accommodating monasticism, hitherto alien in character and outlook, to European conditions and environment." He introduced a more genial element than had been found in the Eastern type of monasticism. One day he came upon a hermit of the older type near Monte Cassino, shut up in a cave and chained with an iron chain to the rock. Said Benedict: "If thou art truly the servant of Christ, let not an iron chain be thy fetter, but the chains of Christ." This attitude is typical of

Benedict's general methods; he was anxious to emphasize the inner principle of renunciation rather than the merely external organization, and that may be the reason why his movement lasted so long and achieved such success. He did not enforce for his monks such abstinences from food as we have seen in the Egyptian hermits; he was anxious only that they should avoid gluttony. He did not ignore the need of cleanliness and warmth, allowed six to eight hours sleep a night, encouraged brevity in prayer, and under his influence the monasteries of the West became centres of culture, "the intellectual saviours of Europe, the ark of the Lord in which there took refuge from the flood of barbarism all that was best in life and thought of the old world." The wisdom of this intellectual emphasis is seen in the fact that when once monasticism "ceased to be the handmaid of learning, the hour of her fall was at hand."[1] Benedict laid down the principle of systematic labour as the rule of all monastic life. Six hours a day, he

[1] Workman, "Evolution of Monastic Ideal," p. 161.

said, should be given to manual toil, and two to reading. This emphasis on the dignity of work was, in effect, one of the most salutary of all rules, for the monks found constant toil of one kind or another to be one of the best safeguards against the power of evil thoughts—as we still find, indeed, in the warfare of the spirit against baser inclinations.

From all this it is clear that we cannot speak broadly of the monastic movement and apply the same criticisms to all sections of it. The type of life encouraged, for example, by Pachomius was far different from the Benedictine. The one was individualistic, extreme, prone to useless rigours; the other was more socialistic, more genial, and directed to useful employments. And the latter type had a clearer sense of the meaning of moral struggle and the way of spiritual conquest. But taking the movement as a whole, as we are bound to do if we desire to estimate its part in the development of the Christian witness, we find elements which induce both admiration and regret. We cannot but admire the resolute

spirit which prompted such stern adherence to rigorous standards. The monastic movement provided an outlet for that spirit of renunciation which, earlier, had sent Christians cheerfully to the stake and the arena. In both cases it was fundamentally the same yearning—the yearning for a purer life and a more spiritual conception of religion—the yearning finding different expressions. And if the martyrs played their part in the safeguarding of the Church from the world without, the monastics played their part in the safeguarding of the Church from the world within. It was a criticism of the Church as well as of the empire, and, to her credit, the Church was quick to see the value of the protest; this is clear, for example, from the attitude of such prominent Church leaders as Athanasius, the two Gregories, and Augustine.

It is ever the way of protests to swing to extremes, and although this is more true of the Eastern than of the Western brand of monasticism, it must be urged that the movement as a whole lost that balanced view of life and its meaning which the New Testa-

ment bequeathed to the world. We may pass over, for the moment, the physical performances already noted in this chapter—the abstinences and disregard of the necessary laws of hygiene. More serious is the emphasis on celibacy, which despised marriage and exalted an unnatural virginity into a position which opposed both the laws of human nature and the purposes of a beneficent Creator. We can understand a noble emphasis on chastity as a protest against the unbridled excesses of the age; but that is a very different thing from the attitude of such a monk as Pior, the Egyptian, who for fifty years refused to see any members of his family when they came to visit him; and who, visiting his sister in response to her appeal, took care to keep his eyes closed all the time. A nun who was dying refused to let her brother see her. Paula, in her zeal for the life of renunciation, turned her back on family life and all that it meant, and left her little son to grow up a heathen. But Nature has a way of taking her revenge, and in a twofold manner we find this unnatural emphasis working out strange results.

"When we turn to the novels and hagiographic literature of the period," says Workman, "we find this sexual aversion oftentimes taking a dangerous erotic form."[1] And it is well known that in monastic circles there eventually developed irregularities and scandals that rivalled the excesses of the outside world. It is difficult for the Christian man of to-day to understand that remark of Paula to Jerome, that a clean body and a clean dress mean an unclean soul. The underlying philosophy is evidently not that of the New Testament, which regards man, soul and body, as a unity, the whole to be consecrated to God, but that of the dualistic systems which regard the body itself as ultimately evil. We may make all allowances for this attitude, bearing in mind the lax conditions against which it was a protest, but even then we are forced to the conclusion that it was a serious symptom of misguided enthusiasm.

The truth is—and the history of the movement showed it—that we cannot escape the

[1] p. 62.

world by fleeing from it. As Benedict saw, worldliness is essentially a matter of the spirit, and not a question of locality or habitation. The monks found, to their cost, that temptations can be just as fierce within the communal life of a monastery as in the full activity of the outer world. When Benedict had to roll his naked body about in a thorn bush in order to overcome the desires of the flesh, he had evidently failed to leave the world behind him in his flight from its vices. Even if it were possible to find virtue by seeking seclusion, we doubt whether such a policy could ever really justify itself. Readers of the "Areopagitica" will remember that Milton once declared that he could not praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, and we may be sure that this is not the kind of virtue that the world really needs. Religion, if we understand it properly, is a much bigger thing than the careful cultivation of personal piety; no man is justified in caring merely for his own soul; if he feels satisfied because he has successfully safeguarded his own spiritual life, there is something wrong. The true life always

has a social reference; if we think about ourselves so much that we forget our neighbour, we do violence to one of the great principles of New Testament religion. It is true that our Lord knew the value of quiet withdrawal from the noisy throng, and that Paul spent some time in solitude in Arabia; but these withdrawals were by way of preparation for campaigns in the very heart of the world. Essentially, the ministries of the New Testament were amid the commotion of life; Paul, for instance, being magnetically drawn to those places where problems were most acute and the need most urgent.

That is why we cannot recommend the monastic type of service as the need for to-day. In spite of its services as a protest against laxity in life, its general tendency was to leave the world to its fate. In our next study we shall find how certain men, trained under the influence of the monastic tradition, felt this, and set out to carry the Gospel along the lanes and highways, thereby seeking to remedy the essential defect. And from the special point of view of these chapters the policy of retirement from the

world may be criticised as opposed to that missionary spirit without which the Christian religion can never be faithful to its Founder. The monastic movement, of course, did include zealous spirits who bravely trod the missionary path, but if we take the significance of the movement as a whole we find its outlook restricted, its emphasis rather upon self than upon the clamant needs of the broad heathen world. The men who forsook the world did so with the highest motives, and rendered, on certain lines, a valuable service; but they forgot that great word "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation."

But if they, as a whole, forgot it, there were others who did not, and in the providence of God men were once again to capture the apostolic spirit and send Christ's heralds on a worldwide campaign.

CHAPTER IV

THE MEN WHO TOOK TO THE OPEN ROAD

THERE is something very attractive about the open road. Could they but speak, our lanes and highways would unfold a story of charm and romance. They are the home of drama and adventure and brave enterprise. Tiny strips upon the surface of our planet, mere scratches on the outer crust, they are yet the links that bind innumerable generations together. Austin Dobson has a delightful essay on the River Thames and its associations; he pictures himself standing on the embankment; memories crowd thick upon him; he sees Steele landing at Strand Bridge, "Sir Roger" and "Mr. Spectator" embarking at the Temple stairs, Horace Walpole's barge go gliding past, Swift bathing in the moonlight . . . The river is a link binding together decades and diverse types and varied experiences.

This is still more true of great roads, for there are more who ride or walk than

who sail. How rich in colour and excitement, for instance, would be the story of the Appian Way! Modern tourists visiting Rome do well if they can reconstruct, in imagination, the stirring events of centuries ago. The steady tramp of returning legions, the triumphal progress of a victor's chariot, the weary but expectant tread of a Paul as he approaches the great city, the flight of Christians from the wrath of a Nero—these are the dramas of a great road. If we could gather this rich experience, the pathos and the comedy, we should find it to be a story of human life. The road that catches the first sweet breath of spring is required also to withstand the bitter blast of winter. The broad highway, eloquent of the moods of Nature, speaks no less clearly of the moods of Man.

There was an American writer who set out to write a book descriptive of his adventures as a tramp in search of happiness. For some time he hesitated in his choice of a title; should he call his book "Adventures on the Road," or "The Country Road"? Then he thought of the people he had met,

and decided on the title "The Friendly Road." It was a good choice, for many before him, in all ages, had found this element of friendliness in their experience of the road. It would not be difficult to illustrate this from the poetry of many ages and many climes, but our purpose in this chapter is to note a movement of Christian enterprise which, believing in the ministry of the open road, found a fruitful sphere of labour for the Master. The men who took to the open road found a Nature and a Humanity responsive to their call: Nature fresh and green in the hedgerows, blithe and gay in the birds, rhythmical like a song in the rising and falling of the pathway; Humanity, needy, poor, afflicted, but quick to respond to the word and the spirit of the Christian message.

By this time, in our survey of Christian adventure, we have reached the opening years of the thirteenth century. Disciples, martyrs, ascetics, monastics, have played their part—a valiant part, as we have seen. But the need in the Christian Church is constant watchfulness and an untiring cam-

paign against disintegrating forces, and the thirteenth century dawned on a Europe that needed a strong spiritual movement to restore its religious life to a pure condition. Anyone could see the need who cared to examine the trend of the times. In some ways the latter part of the twelfth century was "the golden age of monasticism." The numerous monasteries, with their wealth and culture, were centres of increasing influence . . . so it appeared. But a more careful survey of the situation in the religious world revealed causes for misgiving.[1] The secular clergy were often inefficient and sometimes dissolute. It was not unusual for a priest to be a leader in drinking bouts and even worse. In this respect nothing is more significant than the way in which popular ballads held up to ridicule both the priests and their sacred duties. Among the monastic Orders there was probably a higher level of life, and the monasteries produced great men. Yet the great wealth they had amassed and the tendency to forget the high

[1] See "Life of St. Francis," Sabatier, chap. iii.

ideals of men like Benedict and Bernard brought in a slow but sure decline. Religion was becoming less and less a personal matter: the chief concern was the maintenance of the privileges of the Order, the administration of growing revenues; and a disregard of the grave needs of the world without, a danger we have already noted in the very genius of monasticism, was opening a door here and there, so that the spiritual force of organized Christianity was slowly ebbing away. "Our monks dwell at their ease in Zion, conscious doubtless that they have a soul to save, selfishly unconscious of the souls around them. Monasticism had outlived its call; it still survived, respected and wealthy, doing good, too, in a certain patronizing fashion, but the spirit and life was lost, the ideal obscured."[1]

In the midst of this prevailing corruption monasticism itself produced a new departure which was to rekindle the embers of enthusiasm and evangelism and provide the

[1] Workman, "Church of the West in the Middle Ages," ii. 177.

characteristic religious contribution of the thirteenth century. With its fundamental principles of poverty, chastity, and obedience unchanged, it was to widen its horizon and find a new channel for the expression of its ideals. The coming of the Friars, as these men were called who took to the open road, was to effect a spiritual awakening which made its influence felt on popular religion, social conditions, and, eventually, in the centres of learning.

The movement may be considered around its two main exponents, Francis and Dominic, who gave their names to the great Orders of the Franciscans and the Dominicans. Less is known of Dominic than of Francis, and a reference to him may pave the way for a fuller treatment of the more famous Francis.

Dominic de Guzman (1170-1221) was the son of a Castilian noble, and in his youth showed an ardent religious temperament. He became a Canon Regular of the cathedral of Osma, near his birthplace, and began his evangelistic work, in the interests of the Roman Catholic Church, among the Albigenses in the South of France. There he

spent ten years preaching, and in 1206 he founded a school for women of gentle blood. This emphasis on education was to mark his movement all through its history. His enthusiasm and evangelistic zeal soon gathered a band of followers who eventually became organized into the Dominican Friars. Dominic himself spent the closing years of his life in a series of journeys—into Italy, Spain, and France—for the organization of his Order. His followers soon became familiar figures in almost every country of Western Europe. They were essentially preachers; they studied earnestly for that special work, and were untiring in their attacks on heresy and ignorance. This emphasis on education was seen in the schools which they founded, and members of their Order came to hold important posts in the Universities. The Dominicans can always claim the honour of having produced Thomas Aquinas, the "angelic doctor," the great systematizer of the theology of the Roman Church. The Dominicans, as distinct from the Franciscans, had their own special points of emphasis, but we may post-

pone the mention of these until we consider the movement as a whole.

There is no lack of biographical details in the case of the founder of the Franciscans. John Bernardone was born at Assisi in 1182. His father was a prosperous cloth merchant and through his business journeys to France was enabled to initiate his son, who perhaps accompanied him, into the language and customs of the French. It was on account of his fondness for the French people and his familiarity with the romances and songs of the country that John Bernardone received his name "Francis." We are to think, then, of a young man, acquiring in his impressionable years that chivalrous and romantic spirit so strong in the age of chivalry, romance, war, and love, a young man well equipped for a high place in his own social order, and well endowed with this world's goods.

He appears to have indulged in the dissipations common to the wealthy youth of that period, but severe illnesses brought him face to face with the solemn questions of the meaning of life and the value of his own. Like

many other great religious leaders in the history of the Church, Francis experienced a restlessness of soul; he spent days in a cave, seeking peace; on one occasion, we are told, he spent a day in the market place with outstretched hands—a conspicuous figure, for he was clothed in the rags of a beggar. His silences and moods of reflection prompted his friends, perhaps in a spirit of upbraiding, to ask: "Francis, art thou going to take a wife?" He would answer: "I will marry a nobler and fairer bride than ever you saw, who shall surpass all others in beauty and excel them in wisdom." The bride of his dreams was Poverty. He had always had a compassion for the poor, and this aroused the criticism of his family. He would sell all he had to repair a roadside chapel, and his generosity to beggars became embarrassing. His father applied to the magistrates to have him treated as a madman, but Francis applied to the Bishop, who advised him to renounce all his wealth. Never was more welcome advice given; it was in complete accord with the inclinations of the young man, and he set out "naked, to

follow the naked Christ." Gradually he collected a band of followers, prominent among whom is Brother Bernard, who distributed his private fortune among the poor, and whose spirit is well shown in the famous declaration on his death-bed: "For a thousand worlds the like of this I would not have served any other Lord." They went about the lanes and towns of Tuscany, helping in the harvest or any casual work, sleeping in the open or wherever they could, tending the outcasts and the lepers. With eleven companions Francis went to Rome and asked the Pope, Innocent III., to confirm their rule of poverty and devotion to good works. After some hesitation, Innocent gave a verbal approval; they were to be known as Friars Minor, wear a dark grey habit, and go barefoot.

The story of the rest of his life is the record of increasing power and influence. From these small beginnings the Order spread to every land. By his death in 1226 there had spread across Europe a band of devoted men who revelled in poverty, smiled at hardship, bore with patience and even

joy the persecutions that inevitably arose, preaching that most eloquent of all sermons, the life of humble love and service among the poor and despised. Wherever they went enthusiasm burst forth. Wealthy men renounced their fortunes to go and live among the lepers, scholars abandoned their quiet life of study to embrace wandering ministries of bookless hardship. A tragic note is supplied by the story of the two Crusades. Led by Nicholas of Cologne, a lad of twelve, and by the French shepherd boy, Stephen of Cloyes, thousands of children set off to conquer Palestine . . . and were sold into slavery by merchants of Marseilles. The excesses of the movement do more than show the temper of the age; they reveal the tremendous power of attraction which the wandering Friars possessed.

A greater revolution in the religious practice could not be imagined. If we contrast these wandering Friars with the monks of the earlier period we gain some idea of the violence of the change. In place of the wealthy, sheltered life within the monasteries, a barefoot campaign along the rough

roads; in place of the preservation of monastic privilege and revenue, a hazardous consorting with the leprous and the maimed; in place of the gospel of ease for the few, a gospel of salvation for the multitude. It was a definite and courageous attempt to bring back the spirit of Jesus. It seemed a far cry from the prosperity of the monastery to the simple campaign of Jesus and His followers, but the "jesters of the Lord" (as the Friars were sometimes called in their happy service) succeeded in sending men's minds back through the centuries of forgotten evangelism and restoring the spirit of service as the central principle of the Christian life.

What were the ideals that inspired Dominic and Francis? The Dominican ideal differed from the Franciscan, and at first the two types followed different lines. Francis did not emphasize culture; he seems to have dreaded the effect of learning; he wrote with difficulty, and in later years signed his letters with the sign of the Cross. Dominic, on the other hand, made study a rule binding on his followers. This differ-

ence between the two Orders did not remain; in course of time, as youths joined the movement, the Franciscans found that training and education were necessary, and when we come to inquire into their effect on learning we find such eminent names as Bonaventura, Duns Scotus, and William of Occam among the honoured company of the Franciscans. This difference of early emphasis accounts for the description of Dominic and Francis as the apostles of faith and love respectively. The Dominicans, it is said, were preachers, concerned to promote truth and combat error; the Franciscans were social labourers, who went about doing good. But there is a danger in most generalizations, and we must beware of pressing such distinctions too closely. Dominic, for example, as a youth in time of famine sold his books and all his possessions to relieve the distress. Francis, full of compassion for the poor and diseased, could preach with power for the conversion of souls.[1]

The truth is that these men, in spite of difference in this or that, in spite of varied

[1] See Sabatier, "St. Francis," p. 113 *f.*

garb and different direction, shared a common altruism. They could not countenance a religious life which retired from the busy haunts of men to seek selfish peace in the rarer air of some monastic height. They found their mountain height in crowded slum or plague-swept town. "We will not live," they said, "as if we were alone in the world with God." Their determination was to live for others, and how successfully they did it is recorded in terms of enlightenment and healing and succour in the life of thirteenth-century Europe. They were not the first, of course, to be inspired by such an ideal; but in response to the needs of their time they gave such a vigorous and heroic expression to it that they stand out conspicuously in the religious life of the Middle Ages.

We may now pass on to consider more fully the nature and extent of the work accomplished by the Friars. They were proclaimers of a message which gained rather than lost by the very simplicity of their utterance. The word "preacher" has by now gained a definite connotation; its sug-

gestions are those of a carefully prepared discourse, a beautiful pulpit, the arts of oratory. There was nothing of this in the preaching of the Friars; no grace of oratory, nor, in the case of Francis at least, any deep learning. One who heard him preach at Bologna in 1220 wrote: "Francis has not the manner of a preacher . . . his ways were rather those of conversation." It was the simple expression of a burning conviction. These wandering men knew how to seize an opportunity. St. Francis and Brother Leo happened to pass by the foot of the Castle of Montefeltro, where festivities were in progress. "Let us go up unto this feast," said Francis, "for with the help of God we may win some good fruit of souls." We can imagine the astonishment of the revellers in the castle when Francis and his companion broke in upon them, and when Francis began to preach to them on the text:

> "So great the joys I have in sight
> That every sorrow brings delight."

The preaching was found to be effective

. . . could it be otherwise with such zeal and such directness of appeal?

These humble preachers made God real; they saw Him in the trees and heard Him in the song of the birds. They taught men to listen to the birds, and catch in their song an echo of heavenly music. If we may judge from Francis himself, the open road appealed to the brethren. If at times their work led them into squalid hovel or plague-infested street, at other times they tramped the country-side and drank in sweetness from its winding stream. In a degree unusual among great reformers, Francis had an intense sympathy with Nature. As he walked along, it is said, he would pick up a worm lest it should be trodden under foot. He claimed the moon for his sister, the sun for his brother. "If I ever see the emperor," he would say, "I will ask him for the love of God to publish an edict against catching my sisters the larks." Amid the sternness and bareness of the Franciscan life there was one relaxation—Francis allowed his followers the luxury of flowers. Later in the development of the

movement preaching became a privilege for which a Friar was specially trained; we find even manuals with outline discourses and suggested anecdote and illustration; but we may be sure that nothing rivalled the earlier messages in power and beauty. In the first flush of their enthusiasm the followers of Francis and Dominic did not need artificial aids, for the soil was ready, and they had the seed. They scattered it broadcast with a fine, noble gesture, and men and women who had lost their hope in life and who had long ceased to look to organized religion for life and peace, began again to lift up their hearts to God.

The ministry of the Friars gained immeasurably from its essentially practical nature. The new awakening of Christian zeal did not take the form of a new contribution to speculation but a new form of living. Thirteenth-century Europe was privileged to see an increasing band of laymen, for the most part earning their living by the labour of their hands, bound together in social service. While Brother Giles was waiting for a ship to carry him to the Holy Land he

carried water and made baskets. If they could not obtain other occupation, the Friars did not shrink from hiring themselves out as servants. The effect of this humble service and the earnest campaigning for Christ that accompanied it was striking. It was an attempt to practise the principle of brotherly love. No one could doubt the sincerity of these social workers; it was clear from their life as well as from their teaching. It is a comparatively easy matter to preach the principles of brotherly love in the abstract; the test comes when the preacher is confronted by a leper or some outcast for whom society has no place. The Friars welcomed such tests with open arms. In time of pestilence—all too common in those days of primitive sanitation—they were on the spot, and their tending of the sick had the effect of encouraging the study of medicine among the Orders. In France the number of leper hospitals increased from a few to over two thousand, and this is typical of the movement as a whole.

More significant even than this practical succour is the principle of brotherhood which

underlay it. In an age of extremes—extremes of riches and poverty both in the world and in the Church—Francis and his followers were slowly effecting a social revolution. They saw the Divine handiwork even in the vilest man, and none was too depraved to come within their range of sympathy. It was sheer idealism, the idealism of the Sermon on the Mount, and, what is more, it was an idealism which accomplished miracles in that age of faction and social evils.

The educational effect of the movement is worth attention here. Among the contributions to the literature of the period we note manuals of devotion in the vernacular, and paraphrases of the Gospels. The fine spirit of some of the Friars produced religious poetry—Francis's "Canticle of the Sun," Thomas of Celano's "Dies Iræ," Jacopone da Todi's "Stabat Mater Dolorosa," for example. We have already noted that one of Dominic's early departures was the foundation of a school for girls; the Dominicans became conspicuous for their support of learning, and quickly captured the more important Universities.

In Paris, Bologna, Oxford, Cologne, the Friars had houses, and in course of time many of their number read the Theology courses at these Universities. From this attention to education there came valuable work on the Scriptures—textual and expository studies, for example—and thus it happened that the religious revival brought in its train an intellectual revival. This was seen mainly in the realm of theological thought, but it was not confined to this special branch. Science attracted some ardent students, notably Berthold Schwarz, the inventor of gunpowder, and our own famous Roger Bacon. There is some truth in Sabatier's view that "theology has killed religion," and we can see the motive which prompted Francis in his early days to avoid that kind of medieval learning which had obscured the light of the Gospel; it is still more true, however, that clear thinking on religious matters is one of the greatest aids to noble living, and the later development of the Friars' campaign rendered valuable service by its insistence on the cultivated mind.

Perhaps the most outstanding thing of all in this religious revival was its intense missionary enthusiasm. This is so conspicuous because of the violent contrast it presents with the attitude of the monastic system in general. The Franciscans and Dominicans would have made an enduring contribution to the life of Europe if they had done no more than give a social expression to the Christian Gospel. To have worked only in Europe, where the need was so great, would have been a great achievement; what shall we say of these men when we realize their strenuous campaign for the conversion of the infidel? What happened is another illustration of the truth, fundamental in the Christian religion, that Christian enterprise cannot have any bounds at all. Its field is the world and its commission limited only by the needs of men. The same urge that drove Francis and Dominic beyond the monastery walls into the slums and plague-centres led them out of the country into lands beyond the sea.

When the Friars attained some influence in the Universities they began to promote the

study of Oriental languages; their aim was to be equipped for a campaign to the heathen. In 1219 Francis sent off Friars to Spain, Hungary, and the East. From 1220 onwards the Franciscans worked in Morocco, Libya, Tunis, and Algiers. They found their way to the Holy Land, founding convents and houses for pilgrims. In 1291 two Franciscans sailed round Africa with Genoese merchants, and by the fifteenth century members of the Order had reached the Congo. Like Paul they used merchant routes, and carried their message as far as India, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Tibet, and China. In the course of these missionary adventures they endured and suffered with a faithfulness that reminds us of the martyrs we have already studied. One of the most thrilling stories of the time is the record of the missionary work of John of Monte Corvino. Towards the end of the thirteenth century he made his way, after thrilling adventures, to the court of the Tartar Khan of Khanbalig (emperor of Peking), where he laboured until his death in 1329. For eleven years he worked alone. He wrote:

"I have built a church . . . I have baptized there, as I reckon, up to this time, about 6,000 persons; and I am often engaged in baptizing. Also I have bought, one after another, forty boys, the sons of pagans, aged between seven and eleven years, who so far knew no religion. I have written thirty psalters with hymn books, and two breviaries. I have translated into the Tartar language the whole of the New Testament and the psalter."[1] The reading of the letter so impressed the Pope that he sent out others. The work survived until a change of dynasty brought about the murder of these brave workers in 1362. In the centuries that have elapsed since the days of Francis and Dominic many changes have occurred in the methods of their followers, but the missionary spirit remains to this day.

Any historian, faithfully recording the events of the centuries, would have to find place for the story of the decline of this

[1] See Deanesly, "A History of the Mediæval Church," p. 163 *f.*, and "Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics," viii. p. 709 *f.*

religious movement. Although it is not our purpose to enter into the detailed chronicle of the times we must note that the dreams of Francis and Dominic were not all realized. In course of time the simple acceptance of poverty gave way to ingenious methods by which the Friars were able to accept the wealth that poured in upon them. Their early preaching had been the direct message of the Cross; in the case of many this ended in a disastrous Mariolatory. "A revival whose starting point was the value of the individual layman, bequeathed to the Papacy, as the champion of sacerdotalism, a standing army, speaking all languages, scattered through all nations, maintained without cost, and sworn to unhesitating and exclusive service. Exempt from all jurisdiction save that of their own superiors, the Friars became Rome's network of irresponsible police."[1] The movement which began under the inspiration of truth and love came to have its full share of dissension, rivalry, and bitterness. We may admit all this, and

[1] Workman, "Church of the West," ii. 245 *f.*

yet not withhold our admiration for the movement and the real work it accomplished. Its emphasis was salutary. Francis realized that his own special method of serving Christ could not be universally enforced. It was rigorous and austere, yet in a manner different from the way of the earlier ascetics. Francis relinquished wealth, and turned his back on the charms of family life, but not because he thought that these things were evil in themselves. His attitude to life in general was very far from that which had marked the men who forsook the world. He was distinguished by his gaiety of spirit. He enjoyed Nature to the full, and the life of simple service became the greatest joy of all. Contact with men did not deject him; it thrilled him. Sublimely unconscious of the intellectual difficulties in his teaching, and of the dangers that attended its practice, he went on with the single aim—to live out the Sermon on the Mount. It is easy enough to criticise his idealism and point out that it needed to be related to this or that factor of human conditions, but, after all, the world has not so much idealism that

we can afford to despise any expression of it, and the practical work of the Friars showed that their principles were meant for the hard life of concrete fact.

The Middle Ages considered the character of Francis the most perfect since Christ. It is unwise to venture into extreme judgments like this, but there is no doubt that both in his character and his service he recalled the atmosphere of the Christian movement in its earliest days. It was the spirit of adventure for Christ, of self denial, of compassion for humanity. It broke down the class feeling of monasticism and gave to Europe a really democratic movement. It pierced the veneer of twelfth-century civilization, discovered the root need of human nature, and then applied the simplest Gospel remedy. Romantic, adventurous, thrilling —all these words apply to the campaign. To be a Christian as Francis conceived it was to embark upon a really hilarious crusade, finding joy at every step on the way. The onlookers could not see where the happiness came in; what happiness can there be in herding with outcasts and tending

lepers and preaching to supercilious nobles? But Francis knew the secret—his Master's secret: love in service. It is the possession of this secret that entitles the Franciscans and the Dominicans of the thirteenth century to an immortal place among the adventurers for Christ.

CHAPTER V

THE MEN WHO SAILED TO HEATHEN LANDS

THROUGHOUT these studies, as we have dipped into the interesting story of Christian enterprise, there is one topic that has consistently clamoured for consideration—viz., the missionary adventure. We have found that whatever the type, we cannot do justice to its part in the Christian development without searching for its missionary motive. The few facts we have noted have hinted quite plainly that if we are in search of really vigorous and Christ-like service, we had better look in those quarters where Christ's commission to His disciples was well remembered. In order of time, consideration of the missionary motive ought properly to come early in any survey of the Christian movement; from the very beginning the followers of Christ have been committed to worldwide propaganda. But our treatment of the matter at this stage in our inquiry has a double advantage; we have

the plain record of many centuries behind us, and can see what it has actually meant to have the broad outlook; further, we may link up the missionary idea to our modern point of view and find its place in twentieth-century discipleship.

We shall not make the mistake of thinking that the Christian is the only religion which has been stirred by the missionary impulse. Before the dawn of the Christian era there was considerable Buddhist propaganda. The year A.D. 67 is given as the date of the official introduction of Buddhism into China, but Buddhist activity was known long before that date. In China, Tibet, Korea, and Japan, Buddhist missionaries worked their untiring way, with an emphasis in China on translations of scriptures, and in Japan on works of charity. Mohammedan religious writers seem to have been somewhat incurious as to the spread of their own faith, but the Koran laid down definitely the duty of missionary work. "One day," so was the hope expressed, "we will raise up a witness out of every nation." The life of the prophet himself

supplies the keynote; his earliest converts were his wife, his adopted children, and a few members of his immediate circle. The reader who wishes to pursue this matter further will find ample evidence of missionary enthusiasm in the spread of Islam to the Turks, the Mongols, and in India and Africa.

There can be no doubt, however, that *the* missionary religion, *par excellence*, has been the Christian. One of the first things Jesus had to do in His teaching was to break down the Jewish narrowness and exclusiveness, and supply in its place a world outlook. "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans," it was often said in the days of our Lord, and anyone who reads his Old Testament with insight can see the strength of the tradition which Jesus had to break down. In the earlier days of Hebrew history it was not considered obligatory on a Hebrew to deal fairly with an "outsider." The story of Jonah throws a clear light on Jewish exclusiveness. But Jesus came with a Gospel for all—to the Jew first, as Paul said, but also to the Gentile. The outstanding figure in the New Testament, after

Christ, was noteworthy as the apostle to the Gentiles. Whether Christians in the centuries of Church development felt like accepting Paul's theology or not, they could not do other than catch his spirit and missionary zeal—if, that is to say, they were to be faithful to the Christian commission.

The story of Christian missions covers the whole development of the Church. There were, indeed, periods when the need of the broad world seems to have been forgotten. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, for example, the Reformed Churches practically ignored the missionary obligation, though the Roman Church was very active in this direction. This may perhaps be explained as due to the pressure of internal problems which faced the Protestant communities. But with the colonial expansion of England in the seventeenth century there began a wider movement which was ultimately to usher in the day of modern missions. With the exception of these periods, the Christian Church continued to look with evangelistic yearnings to lands beyond the seas. Before the middle of the

second century, Justin Martyr had claimed for Christian enterprise a worldwide field. Half a century later Tertullian boasted of the spread of the movement. "We are a people of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you. . . ." Origen claimed that the Gospel had penetrated into many parts of the barbarian world. Making allowance for the exaggeration of some of these early claims, we can see, at least, that the Empire of the Cross was extending its boundaries. The conversion of Constantine was followed by extensions of Christianity into Africa, Asia, and Europe. "Before the close of the eleventh century, nearly all Europe had been won to Christianity of the Roman or the Greek allegiance, and the borders of Christendom had been extended, to north and east, far beyond the limits of the Old Empire—to Greenland and Iceland, to Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, to the shores of the Baltic, the plains of Poland, the Carpathian highlands, and the western regions of modern Russia. . . ."[1] In the

[1] "Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics," art. "Missions," viii. 708.

fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, when Spain and Portugal took the lead in exploration, conquest, and commerce, the Roman Catholic Church found, and utilized, a great opportunity for the extension of its influence. Spanish fleets never sailed without carrying missionaries from the various Roman Orders. It is no part of our purpose to trace this in detail; sufficient to indicate that the spirit has prevailed, and that it is a fair conclusion to draw, that in the most vigorous periods of Church life there has always been an alert evangelism with a worldwide objective.

There is a very strong reason why members of Christian Churches in England should take an interest in missionary propaganda—viz., that the Christianizing of Britain was due, in the first place, to the work of immigrants from older provinces of the Roman empire, supplemented by more definite missionary work. And if, as is the case, we owe our finest idealism and the moral standards of the race to the introduction of the Christian ethic, we who treasure the high tone of British life at its

best can do no other than acknowledge our debt to those, whoever they were, who first named Christ's Name in our island.

It is impossible to fix an exact date for the beginnings of Christian life in England. Legends, of course, abound; it has been asserted that the Christian Church was first planted here by James, the brother of John; by Simon the Zealot; by Peter. The inference has been made that the Apostle Paul came to Britain; the Pudens and Claudia mentioned in 2 Timothy may have been the same Pudens and Claudia, the latter of whom is mentioned by Martial as of British origin. In this case Paul had made converts in Britain before the date of 2 Timothy. Some think there is support for this view in Clement of Rome's assertion that Paul travelled "into the extreme West." All this, however, is conjecture;[1] we are on safer ground if we think of immigrants coming to England from older provinces in the empire—skilled workers, doctors, schoolmasters, possibly soldiers—bringing with

[1] See "Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics," art. "Church, British," iii. 632.

them the new religion. Tertullian, writing about A.D. 206, mentions as among those who had believed in Christ a number living in places in Britain which, "though inaccessible to the Romans, have become subject to Christ." Probably there is more in this than the rhetoric which Tertullian so dearly loved. We may certainly accept J. R. Green's statement that "when Christianity became the religion of the empire under the House of Constantine, Britain must have been nominally Christian."[1]

This state of affairs was not maintained, however, for at a later date we find Rome anxious to re-establish the sway of Christ. Gregory the Great summoned from the monastery of St. Andrew the monk Augustine and some forty companions, and sent them on a mission to the West. These missionaries landed in the Isle of Thanet in the year 597, and opened a campaign which was to have far-reaching effects for English life. These "strangers from Rome," as the missionaries entitled themselves, by their example of the godly life were able to win

[1] "The Making of England," i. 6.

many converts. Canterbury became the centre of their influence. Latin became once again one of the tongues of Britain, the language of its worship and its literature. The landing of Augustine "renewed that union with the Western world which the landing of Hengist had all but destroyed. The new England was admitted into the older commonwealth of nations. The civilization, arts, letters, which had fled before the sword of the English conquerors returned with the Christian faith."[1]

The story of Christianity in England is long and involved; the main currents of thought that swept across Europe never failed to reach the English shores, and through the long periods of decay and revival there was at work that subtle influence which marks the Christian faith whatever its particular kind of theology or form of organization. The best elements of our national life owe much to this influence. Zealous Romanists, ardent Reformers, intense Puritans, eighteenth-century Revivalists, were the exponents of something

[1] Green, "Making of England," i. 249.

bigger than their particular emphasis. They played their part in the development and adaptation of a religious life which was to leave its stamp on all that is highest in English character. In spite of the occasional failures of organized religion, the benefits of Christian civilization have been so clearly revealed that we cannot resist the impulse to send to other peoples that which has been so beneficial to our own.

The spirit of any movement is revealed in the quality of its men and women, and we may gain some idea of the splendour of the missionary impulse when we consider the men it has swayed and the victories it has won. To allow the mind to roam through the broad field of Christian missions is to discover a type of Christian service which, at its best, cannot be excelled. In this realm denominational prejudices do not count; a Protestant can admire the zeal and heroism of a Roman Catholic monk. A student of missionary history may profoundly disagree with doctrines and even methods adopted by Roman propagandists, but he cannot remain unmoved by the re-

counting of the tale of sacrifice and unquenchable enthusiasm which marked so many. We choose our examples, therefore, quite irrespective of their denomination, and if they are of the modern period, it is only that we may connect their spirit with the needs of to-day.

There used to be a statue in Louvain (whether still there after the ravages of war we do not know) which served as a constant reminder of one of the noblest followers of Christ Belgium ever produced. It was the statue of a man, holding a crucifix to his heart, his right arm thrown around a leper crouching to his side for comfort. The crucifix, the leper, the uplifted face, suggest a story of bravery and Christian love which is not excelled in the annals of missionary heroism. It was a simple memorial of Joseph de Veuster, son of peasant parents, who thrilled the whole world by his self-sacrifice. Father Damien, as he came to be known, joined, on very short notice, a band of missionary enthusiasts bound for the Hawaiian Islands. He went out as a substitute for his elder brother, and for nine

years (1864-73) he laboured in those islands preaching and practising the love of God. For a long time the Hawaiian Islands had suffered from the scourge of leprosy, and eventually it was resolved to form a leper colony on the Isle of Molokai. With the utmost rigour all lepers were deported there, irrespective of rank or age. It does not need much imagination to picture the lot of these poor outcasts. Without health, or hope, or family comforts, they painfully dragged out their living death. It was a situation which would have appealed to a St. Francis. It did appeal to Father Damien, who volunteered to go to the leper settlement to minister among the stricken people, many of whom he knew. In 1873 he landed on the beach of Molokai, and his great work had begun.

At this time Father Damien was thirty-three. His decision was not the impulsive choice of an ascetic who saw no joy in life. He was robust in build, a sportsman in temperament, fond of cliff-climbing and swimming. The life to which he voluntarily surrendered his vigorous years was as far

removed as possible from that which athletic young men usually seek. Others visited the settlement long after Damien's work had cleansed it of its more hideous features; notably R. L. Stevenson, who even then found the experience "grinding" and "harrowing." What the settlement was like when Damien went there it is hard to imagine. He confessed that, for a moment, his heart sank when he saw what he had chosen; but only for a moment. His first task was to repress the feelings of repulsion which crept over him as he went among his flock. He conducted services—often with an intense longing to rush out for a breath of clean air. He tended the sick, acting as best he could as doctor. He became coffin-maker, grave-digger, undertaker. He induced the people to build houses, becoming himself a general builder and contractor. In the midst of this exacting work he went about among the lepers trying to infuse a spirit of cheerfulness into their weary souls. Never was there a ministry of man that combined more effectively attention to soul and body. Chapels were erected, and two

orphanages, where he gathered the boys and girls. At last he contracted the dread disease, but even then carried on his Herculean tasks as before. Nor did the approach of the inevitable end discourage him; he set about preparing for the work that should be done after him, and, to his great joy, had the satisfaction of knowing that others of his Order would carry on the ministry. So tremendous was the impression created by his selfless service that a band of Franciscan sisters volunteered to serve as nurses in a hospital that was to be erected—so far down the ages had the spirit of St. Francis borne fruit. It is almost an impertinence to comment on such a life as Father Damien's. We may be content with the question: What other dynamic than the love of Christ could have urged such a man to such a work?

This is the only valid explanation of the impulse that has sent, and is sending, so many on the campaign for Christ beyond the seas. Love for one's native land will nerve some to extreme lengths of heroism and devotion; many for love of knowledge

will hazard fortune, limb, and life—science has her martyrs as well as religion—but no one can deny that in the story of selfless service of humanity the missionary rôle takes the honoured place. The decision to take part in this great adventure is so often taken in face of criticism and disparagement. "Why risk a strange land when there is so much work to be done in the land you know?" "Why not leave the natives to themselves; they are happy—to disturb them is to do them a disservice?" "Why sacrifice home comforts here for the altogether different life in Eastern lands—and think of your children? . . ." These, and similar cries are heard. And traders with an interest in the continuance of heathenism join voices with those who say, "One religion is as good as another," to disparage the work. Nor is it always that the Church at home is enthusiastic about the need for missionary propaganda. To-day, when the blessed results of this work are so evident, a missionary can set out on his career with the support and sympathy of the home Church; but we do well to remember that in the early

days of modern missions the home Church had to be roused to a sense of its obligation.

It is this point that makes the life and career of William Carey so important in modern Christian enterprise. It has been said that "the story of Carey's effort to rouse the Church of his native land to its opportunity and obligation is in some respects even more romantic and heroic than his missionary career."[1] This founder of modern Christian missions, apprenticed at the age of fourteen to shoemaking, from the first possessed, or rather was possessed by, an adventurous spirit. He loved books of travel and history, and supplemented a mind rich in powers of observation by what reading he could get. In his youth Columbus was his hero, and in his later teens the Voyages of Captain Cook cast a spell over his mind. For ten years he submerged himself in all that related to missionary venture. With a home-made map before him and a home-stitched globe of leather, his mind would persist in wandering far from his

[1] S. K. Datta, quoted in "William Carey," S. Pearce Carey.

cobbler's bench to the distant lands where heathenism sent up its piteous cry. This direction of his mind coloured all his early praying and preaching, and what could his immaturity say to J. C. Ryland's retort: "When God wills to convert the heathen world, He'll do it, and without your help or mine. Besides, there must first be another Pentecost, and another miraculous diffusion of tongues"? Whatever our admiration for Carey's later zeal, it cannot outdo our admiration for his tenacity and persistence under these early discouragements. Many a man would have been silenced by such a verdict as that of Northampton's famous preacher; but it could not daunt Carey, and he went on preaching and persuading. "An idealist, with his head in the clouds," they said. But there came a day when, in Kettering on October 2, 1792, a little band ventured the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society, the fourteen of them promising subscriptions totalling £13 2s. 6d.

Critics made a mistake when they ridiculed the idea of launching world-missions on such a small sum; they forgot what was behind

those guineas—a power that was to brave many disappointments and overcome them all. Carey had set his mind on the South Seas, about which he had learned so much in his reading of Captain Cook. But in the providence of God, India became the sphere of his immortal labours. For forty years, until his death in 1834, he was to pursue his life-work under a recurrence of disappointments that would have broken the heart of most men. After five years of toil and preaching—not a single convert; the early deaths of men who were his colleagues; the prejudices of both British and Indian foes rising into open attack; malicious pamphlets and the invective of the *Edinburgh Review;* a fire which burnt the printing works to the ground, ruining priceless manuscripts and type; friction within the Missionary Society at home—what a record of cloud and storm!

Yet Carey and his colleagues, Marshman and Ward, went steadily on. We see Carey busy translating the Scriptures, earning money for this by teaching in Government classrooms, building in Serampore a college with a full University charter, tending his

amazing five-acred botanic garden, the finest then in the East—all this a solid record of sincere devotion. We can catch his spirit in one of his letters: "I would not abandon the Mission for England's finest spheres. My greatest calamity would be separation from this service. May I be useful in laying the foundations of Christ's Church in India, I desire no greater reward, nor can conceive a higher honour. The work, to which God has set His hands, will infallibly prosper. Christ will assuredly carry this strong fortress. It is not His way to desert what He has once undertaken." To-day, the whole Church takes pride in acclaiming Carey as a genius. If he had turned his attention to linguistic pursuits only, or to the study of botany, he would have taken an assured place among pioneers; his record in India proves that. But he chose, first, to be a simple missionary carrying God's good news. That choice opened up the way for the development and expression of his great gifts; all his varied greatness was laid at the feet of Christ.

The truth is that there is an embarrassing

wealth of material for the student of missionary enterprise who desires to show the strength of its dynamic. Conspicuous leaders may be selected here and there, but theirs is only the same spirit that has marked the "rank and file" of missionary story. There is a panorama of greatness; we see James Gilmour living the life of a nomad on the plains of Mongolia; George Leslie Mackay tramping far Formosa with a Bible in one hand and dentist's forceps in the other; David Livingstone opening up Central Africa to the power of the Gospel; John G. Paton carrying the Christian torch amid the darkness of the New Hebrides; Mary Slessor honouring her sex and her Lord in Calabar; to-day, Albert Schweitzer, famous as theologian and interpreter of Bach, relinquishing his opportunity of enjoying these interests to carry healing to "the edge of the primeval forest." And what shall we say of those not so well known, serving the same Lord in the same spirit and deserving the same honour? There is a dynamic at work here that need not fear comparison with any of the great

impulses that send men and women on quest or conquest. We cannot sum it up in terms of wealth or fame or even those urges towards self-expression of which our psychologists speak. It can only be expressed in terms of that Christian devotion which has marked the adventurous spirits of the Church from its first days until now.

It is worth while to notice the many-sided activities of the missionary movement. The story of Christian advance proves that the men who sailed to heathen lands were not only gripped by a lofty ideal of service; they were, in many cases, endowed with gifts of application and organization. There may have been impractical visionaries here and there, but, for the most part, the servants of Christ knew how to adapt themselves to the new conditions, were able to create channels along which their influence might effectively proceed. Always there has been the apostolic spirit, but sometimes the methods adopted have ventured along lines which the apostles did not know. One of the greatest features of modern missionary enterprise, the mission school and college,

has no exact precedent in apostolic times. It is not always realized what a mighty force educational missions have been. Bishop Gore, the chairman of a Commission on this subject, reporting to the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910, spoke of the rich fruit which the educational labours of missionaries have borne in every part of the world. He spoke of the diffusion of Christian ideas and ideals "far beyond the region of any specific church influence," the elevation of outcasts, the first introduction of the very idea of the education of women, the sustaining of the ideal of education as a harmonious training of the whole man with definite regard to a goal of social service.[1] We have seen how the Dominicans and the Franciscans realized the importance of education, and how the cloister school of monastic missionaries became a prominent feature of their work. The Christian staffing of high schools and colleges has rendered great service. The ideal is the infusion of society with Christian ideals, and

[1] See "Edinburgh, 1910," by W. H. T. Gairdner, chap. 9.

there is no way more effective than a steady teaching in the schools.

Along the same line, the production of literature, the translations of the Scriptures, is one of the most remarkable examples of missionary ability. William Carey's work in this field was amazing. "When Carey reached Bengal . . . practically only the Tamil and the Sinhalese had God's Word in their own tongues. Only two lamps were burning; and these in India's southernmost corner and its transjacent isle. The vast rest was in the dark. But ere Carey's course was finished he had lit God's lamps through India's length and breadth."[1] He was able to translate the Bible, or the important parts of it, into thirty-four languages, and in a single year his Braj Bhasha New Testament led eighteen into the service of Christ. Etymologists and linguists at our Western Universities have often cast eyes of wonder at Christ's servants on the mission field.

Our reference to the work of Father Damien is a reminder that no part of the

[1] "William Carey," p. 404.

missionary campaign has more captured the popular imagination than the work of medical missionaries. Probably the medical aspect of missions makes the strongest appeal to the general public. Critics who say "Leave the heathen to their own gods" are never heartless enough to say "Leave them to their own unscientific and superstitious treatment of health and disease." There is a common and human appeal in suffering. Disease links us together in a humanity that overleaps barriers of race or colour, and the presentation of the need has never failed to draw a response from skilled doctors and surgeons. The foreign field cannot offer the rewards of Harley Street, but it presents a sphere of service not excelled in its opportunity of tender and helpful ministries. It has such a clear precedent in the Ministry of Christ. The needs of womanhood, also, have made their appeal, and among the fine results of missions must be placed the lifting of that yoke which for centuries bore down upon the women of non-Christian lands. It is fitting that this should be the case, for where has womanhood ever found a greater

advocate and friend than Christ? Other activities can be added to this list. Industrial missions have brought Western methods of building and sanitation within the reach of native peoples. Among explorers we may mention names like Livingstone, Krapf, Rebmann, Grenfell; among philologists, James Legge, R. Caldwell, H. A. Jaeschke, Carl Meinhof; among anthropologists R. Codrington and John Roscoe. These are activities subsidiary to the main missionary impulse, but they show the widespread nature of the work, the ability that has been wedded to missionary fervour, and the debt civilization owes to the missionary idea.

The impression we gain from all this is that the men who sailed to heathen lands were inspired by a broad conception of the Gospel and its application. For them it meant a Gospel for the complete life. It was the Gospel of deliverance—of heathendom from superstition, polytheism and their attendant evils; of the mind from its darkness; of the body from disease; of womanhood from its degradation; of society from inhuman grades and castes; deliverance,

through the power of Christ. Missionary activity, as we have seen, has taken many forms, but the central and dominating principle has been the proclamation of Christ as Saviour of men. The work of doctor, nurse, carpenter, teacher, has supplemented the appeal of the evangelist, but never taken its place in true missionary enterprise. Without the definite proclamation of Christ the other activities would take the level of philanthropy; with it they form a many-sided movement in definite accord with the principles of New Testament Christianity.

In estimating the services rendered to the Church by missionary enterprise we must not forget its favourable reaction on the work in the home field. The widening of the sphere of Christian influence has served to deepen our conception of the meaning of Christianity itself. Again and again, as we have seen, the Church has been in danger of falling into what we may call a false domesticity, a complete absorption in the problems that lie near at hand, a satisfaction with the world if all goes well at home. Such a condition spells lethargy and means

inevitable decline. All through the years it has been the missionary impulse that has saved the Church from this danger. It has taught us that not by careful safeguarding do we find real safety, but in adventurous hazarding. It has meant the broadening of our sympathies, for we have learned that beneath a dusky skin there lies a heart like ours, a nature that can respond, as ours does, to the challenge of Christ when once He is understood. It has tested the reality of that universalism in which every Christian is supposed to believe. And it has been all to the good that occasionally our minds have been taken away from our comparatively developed Church life in the West to contemplate the more primitive life of new Christian communities. On the mission field there is often a state of things closely akin to the conditions which Paul and the apostles knew. In the heroism of the missionaries we have the Acts of the Apostles written over again. To study the experiences of native converts is to realize afresh the charm of the Christian appeal, to marvel at the ready acceptance of sacrifices which

our Western discipleship does not involve. We see the problems of the early Church worked out again—the clash between the new faith and long-established customs, the conflict between Christian and heathen points of view. Most of all, we gain fresh evidence of the power of the Gospel unto salvation.

For all this the Church at home may thank the men who sailed to heathen lands, or, perhaps, as they themselves would say, the tremendous impulse which has enabled them to count all hardship joy if they could only carry their beloved Gospel into realms of heathendom and night.

CHAPTER VI

THE MEN WHO CARRIED THE GOSPEL TO THE SLUMS

The attempt is sometimes made to divide the history of the Christian Church into periods, giving to each its label, to denote its main characteristics and its permanent contribution. This can be done only in a broad and general way, for it is impossible to make rigid and absolute divisions between one period and another. The life of societies, like that of consciousness itself, may be likened to a stream. It may vary in width, in force, in volume, but there is a continuity which gives it identity through all the variety of its course. It is so with the Christian Church in its windings through the centuries. The continuity is supplied, fundamentally, by the Spirit of Christ, the only explanation of the persistence of the Church through so many and so varied fortunes. It is this which has kept alive the ideal of service, though that service, as

we have seen, has taken manifold forms and achieved varied results.

Now suppose we try to divide the centuries into roughly marked periods. We find that it is not a difficult matter to do this, provided that our interest is mainly theological. The times of the Apologists; controversies concerned with the doctrine of God; controversies concerned with the doctrines of Divine Nature and human nature; Christological controversies; controversies concerning the nature and application of salvation—these are periods not difficult to discern. But we note that the main interest is theological, and anyone who is interested in modern problems might well ask "But where does sociology come in?" Where do we find the Church supremely concerned to apply the Christian principles to social issues and the reorganization of human society? A modern Christian is apt to place these problems in the forefront, and he may be forgiven if he occasionally wonders whether the Church has, in the past, been so wrapped up in theological questions that she has often overlooked the need for

definite social propaganda. None who understands the significance of clear thinking will underestimate the importance and the value of the theological controversies, but he will realize that critics who have described the Church as often negligent of social issues are not without historic backing. It is surely significant that in considering the various types of Christian enterprise we deal last of all with those men who carried the Gospel to the slums.

It is true that *definitely organized* social propaganda by the Church has come somewhat late in development. There are reasons for this. The following considerations need to be borne in mind. (1) Apostolic Christianity lived and worked in an atmosphere of expectation of our Lord's return. It has been well said that "Paul organized no anti-slavery meetings, and Peter made no public protest against the organized grafting in the Roman system of tax-farming."[1] The attitude is broadly expressed in the view, "Why should Christians worry about any

[1] Rauschenbusch, "Christianity and the Social Crisis," p. 152.

external matters when the End is so near?" The early Christians thought they were at the end of things; we may wonder what would have been their policy if they had realized that they were but at the beginning of the Christian development. (2) For a considerable time the Church was under the sway of Greek views which, through a dualism of soul and body, disparaged all that pertained to the bodily relationship. (3) The gradual development of ceremonialism and sacramental ritual tended to obscure the spirituality of the Gospel, and thus to weaken the ethical passion of Christianity. (4) The dogmatic interest, the prolonged disputation over minute matters of speculative interest, tended to divert men's minds from the more practical matters of Christian application. Facts like the foregoing help to explain why Christian history went so long without definite and organized attempts to revolutionize the social order and bring it more into line with the implications of Christ's teaching.

It is important to notice that we say "definite and organized attempts," for none can doubt that in every age there have been

those whose spirits were stirred by social unrighteousness, and who burned, like the prophets of Israel, to have an order of life wherein the laws of God might be fully applied. There is no book in the world which has a keener social sympathy than the New Testament. We have only to think of the intense humanity in the teaching of Jesus, of His attitude to the poor, the oppressed, and the outcast. We need only picture Paul as he entered Corinth, that amalgam of Newmarket, Chicago, and Paris, as a witty writer has described it, with its streets by night hideous with the brawls of revelry, by day thronged with all sorts and conditions of men. There Paul abode, quietly plying his craft, living in the midst of human need at its worst. Or turn to the Epistle of James and read his strictures on the rich. The New Testament certainly throbs with social sympathy, and although there is no attempt to revolutionize society, any more than there is any attempt to establish a new political system, the principles are there which ultimately effected a vast change in the social life of mankind.

The growing Christian movement found a warm place for slaves and outcasts. The labours of wandering Friars were labours of succour and help. This is true—that individual action all during the long years has achieved much in social redemption. "Has it not lifted woman to equality and companionship with man, secured the sanctity and stability of marriage, changed parental despotism to parental service, and eliminated unnatural vice, the abandonment of children, blood revenge, and the robbery of the shipwrecked from the customs of Christian nations? Has it not abolished slavery, mitigated war, covered all lands with a network of charities to uplift the poor and the fallen, fostered the institutions of education, aided the progress of civil liberty and social justice, and diffused a softening tenderness throughout human life?"[1] No one can dispute these facts, and yet, it must be confessed, organized Christianity has frequently been on the conservative side, and hesitated to make the social plunge which conditions

[1] Rauschenbusch, p. 147.

of human life made so imperative. It is only in recent years that, in C.O.P.E.C., we have the mind of the organized Church definitely turned to the social problems of human life. But although this official attitude has come somewhat late in the centuries, it is now a permanent attitude, and our purpose in this chapter is to take account of that form of Christian discipleship which has succeeded in bringing the social implications of the Gospel into the forefront of Christian interest.

Our inquiry now leads us into the nineteenth century, and into England, where we witness the stirrings of many new movements and the clash of new ideas on long-established custom. Historians of the future will probably rank the nineteenth among the most critical and fruitful for our national fortunes. In politics, science, literature, religion, it was an era of great names and far-reaching movements, and is made exceptionally interesting by the close connection which existed between these various realms. The religious movements of the nineteenth century, for example, cannot be understood

without some reference to scientific and political developments, while a glance at the important literature of the period will show how responsive it was to the forces which were steadily reorganizing English society. During this century our English life saw an increasing application of the humanitarian spirit to the many problems which the past had bequeathed to us. It was in 1833, for instance, that the Act was passed which emancipated all British slaves in the colonies; the abolition of this slave trade became an accomplished fact from August 1, 1834. It was in this century that the efforts of reformers like Sir Samuel Romilly, Sir James Mackintosh, and philosophers like Jeremy Bentham were able to effect great improvements in our penal system. These years, too, saw definite attention to the questions of child-welfare, housing, and sanitation. All these reforms were the expression of a spirit which took a considerable time to create a sufficiently strong public opinion, and although our concern here is the attitude of Church leaders to these important questions, we may be permitted to go back a

little way and note some important factors in our social awakening.

It has often been remarked that a spirit of earnest religious enthusiasm was characteristic of the English people from the days of the Reformation. The close of the seventeenth century, however, seemed to mark the end of this, for we find the eighteenth century in the grip of Deism. It was an age of various attacks on the Christian religion and of emphasis on natural religion. The deep sense of personal religion, the personal conviction seen in men like Cromwell and Bunyan, had given place to appeals to reason and "common sense." It is not surprising, therefore, that the first thirty years or so of the eighteenth century were, religiously, more or less stagnant. But a great revival appeared, led by Wesley and Whitefield, and profoundly influenced our country for good. The effect was seen, in the Church, in a strong evangelical emphasis; in literature, in the vogue of hymns—we may mention the names of Wesley, Newton, Watts, and Cowper; in philanthropy, for a new spirit of kindness

took hold on many, and we find various societies founded for education and work among the poor. It was in 1780 that Robert Raikes began his Sunday school at Gloucester, inaugurating an era of attention to young life in religious matters.

While the Evangelical Revival was working out its beneficent results in English life, there was in progress in France a movement of a different order. The ominous rumblings in French political and social life broke out into storm, and the French Revolution of 1789 sent a thrill through the civilized world. It seemed like the promise of a new day wherein humanity was to press forward into an epoch of liberty, brotherhood, and the rights of man. The enthusiasm of the outburst captured young and ardent minds in England as well as in France. As Wordsworth afterwards wrote:

> But Europe at that time was thrilled with joy
> France standing on the top of golden hours,
> And human nature seeming born again;

And again:

> Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive
> But to be young was very heaven.

The radiant promise of 1789, however, remained unfulfilled. The dreams of liberty, fraternity, and equality were worked out in excesses which shocked even the ardent spirits. The excesses of the Reign of Terror, the rise of Napoleon with his military despotism, the long period of wars straining and draining the national life, produced many disturbances in thought and feeling. In England a reaction set in. Wordsworth, for example, who began his literary career as a strong supporter of the Revolution, ended by turning his back on the progressive ideals and seeking refuge in extreme conservatism. But eventually this spirit of extreme reaction died down—the pendulum had been allowed to swing itself away from the extremes—and by the thirties of the nineteenth century we find that the democratic impulse of the Revolution had firmly established itself in English thought. Shelley, in his preface to "The Revolt of Islam," explained that he considered the reaction following the Revolution to be merely temporary, and that the dawn of a new day was at hand. He had a passion for

reforming the world, and readers of his poetry know how this passion blazes out again and again. In this way the literature of the period indicates the dreams and aspirations of young England, aspirations destined to have many a shock amid the growing scientific and commercial spirit of the nineteenth century, but destined also to leave a permanent effect for good on our national life.

Side by side with these factors, we must take account of a revolution of another order which swept across England during the latter part of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth centuries. It was the era of the Industrial Revolution, and the story of those years is the story of the application of mechanical inventions to industry, of the change from the domestic to the factory system, of attention to means of transport, road, canal, and rail. This was the period wherein were laid the foundations of modern British industry. Such a radical change could not be effected without the introduction of many problems. There was, for example, the grave problem of the dis-

tribution of population. About the middle of the eighteenth century the most thickly populated districts in England were Gloucestershire, Somersetshire, Wiltshire, Worcestershire, Northamptonshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire. With the development of the factory system we note the migration of people to the towns in what are now our industrial areas, with all the attendant problems of overcrowding, insanitation, and disease. The development of industry, together with the democratic ideals of the time, were responsible for very marked social unrest, which found expression not only in political agitation, but also in attempts at industrial organization of which our modern trade unionism is the conspicuous product. All these factors combined to make nineteenth-century England a land of political and industrial enthusiasm and mass movements.

The results were very important for religion. Every social movement reacts upon the life of the Church, and theologians of seventy years ago could not be content with abstract speculations about problems

remote from actual human experience. In the towns and cities within a short radius of every church there lay problems which were a constant challenge to the Christian religion. What was the Church to say to the masses of working-men who, in the fifties and sixties, were gathering in increasing numbers into the trade union movement? What was she to say about overcrowding, sweating, the neglect of child welfare? What attitude was she to adopt in regard to the slums, with their horrors of vice and misery? It is in order that we may find an answer to these questions that we now turn to consider that type of Christian discipleship which found its main interest in the application of the principles of Jesus to the social problems of the day. Obviously we can only touch the matter lightly here and there, but two prominent examples — one within the Established Church, the other eventually outside all denominations altogether—will serve to indicate the spirit and, in some measure, the results of this kind of Christian enterprise.

The attitude of English Churchmanship in the nineteenth century cannot be under-

stood without some reference to Charles Kingsley. Many who are not familiar with his social service know him as the author of charming books. Children read his "Water Babies" and his "Heroes," vocalists sing his lyrics, the theologically minded enjoy his sermons, while those who have a taste for his form of novel find delight in "Glaucus" and "Hypatia" and "Westward Ho!" Clergyman, poet, novelist, social reformer, Kingsley represents the spiritual side of the social movement in the middle of the nineteenth century, just as Lord Shaftesbury and the reformers of the factory system represent the more material side—though the two sides cannot be absolutely separated. Born in 1819, in Devonshire, the son of a clergyman, he was trained at King's College, London, and at Cambridge. His first curacy was at Eversley, in Hampshire, and here he came into daily contact with the life of the agricultural labourer. Up to this time the writings of Frederick Denison Maurice and Thomas Carlyle had exercised a formative influence on his acute mind, and he began—bravely and somewhat unusually for those

times—to preach to his people on the social and political issues of the day. A group of young University men formed themselves into a band of "Christian Socialists" led by F. D. Maurice, and Kingsley threw himself into this movement with all the power of his intense nature. Very soon he became famous for his tracts and pamphlets, signed "Parson Lot." He advocated reform, with an emphasis on the need for *personal* reform and the avoidance of force or violence. "God will only reform society," he was fond of saying, "on the condition of our reforming every man his own self." Under the title "Cheap Clothes and Nasty," he mercilessly criticised the results of sweating in the tailoring trade, and pleaded that no man calling himself a Christian should ever patronize the shops which dealt in such goods. "Let no man enter them: they are the temples of Moloch, their thresholds are rank with human blood." About this time he produced two novels: "Yeast," which gave a picture of the conditions of life among the agricultural classes, and "Alton Locke" which portrayed the despair

and disappointments of the intelligent artisan classes in the towns. In 1849, when cholera was raging in London, he urged with voice and pen the need for sanitary reform. He spoke of what he knew; he had investigated districts infested with the cholera scourge. "O that I had the tongue of St. James," he cried; "to plead for these poor fellows, to tell what I myself saw." In a sermon preached in London, and entitled: "The Message of the Church to the Labouring Man," Kingsley said: "I assert that the business for which God sends a Christian priest in a Christian nation is to preach freedom, equality, and brotherhood in the fullest, deepest, widest meaning of those three great words; that is, as far as he so does, he is a true priest, doing his Lord's work with his Lord's blessing on him; that in so far as he does not, he is no priest at all, but a traitor to God and man. . . ." His mind was clear, his attitude definite—too definite, indeed, for the majority of his fellow-clergy.

It is difficult for the Christian of to-day, living in an era of C.O.P.E.C., to under-

stand the opposition that Kingsley aroused. Granted that he was exceedingly zealous, and rather pointed in his remarks, yet his position was all the time so spiritual in its emphasis that we might have expected sympathy with his aims if not with his exact methods of attaining them. "Alton Locke" was received with antagonism by the religious press, and Kingsley himself was denounced as a corrupter of the morals of youth and a disgrace to his Church. We need not place too much emphasis on this opposition, for it has been the lot of reformers in every age. And while there were loud-voiced opponents among those who could not distinguish between Kingsley's spiritual point of view and the cruder revolutionary aims of the more materially minded, there were many who sent him letters of sympathy and encouragement. His was essentially a challenging message, and no challenger of human society has ever the right to expect a plain and easy path—so much we may learn from the Gospels. Eventually honours crowded upon him—in 1859 he was appointed one of her Majesty's

chaplains; in the following year he became Professor of Modern History at Cambridge; in 1869 he was made a Canon of Chester Cathedral—all these adding to the literary distinction he had so well earned.

Two points in his programme merit special attention here: his strong reliance on the Bible, and his emphasis on the science and duty of health. The Bible, he said, is the true reformer's guide—"the true voice of God against tyrants, idlers, and humbugs; it expresses the deepest yearnings of the poor man's heart far more nobly, more searchingly, more daringly, more eloquently, than any modern writer has done." In his emphasis on the science and duty of health he laid himself open to the rather foolish criticism that they were forsaking the Gospel of Salvation for the "Gospel of drains," but Kingsley's attitude was based on the opinion that the promotion of the science of health was a distinct obligation of the Christian Church. "Some fancy," he said, "that the business of a clergyman is exclusively what they choose to call 'spiritual,' and that sanitary reform, being what they choose

to call a 'secular' question, is beyond their province . . . but I can say, proudly and joyfully, as a clergyman of the Church of England, that this notion is daily dying out under the influence of those creeds which tell that the Son of God has redeemed all mankind, body, soul, and spirit, and therefore teaches clergymen to look on the physical and intellectual improvement of every human being as a duty no less sacred than his spiritual welfare."

In this emphasis Kingsley, from one point of view, was a pioneer; the movement of science since his day has shown more clearly than ever the very close connection which exists between the physical and the spiritual aspects of human nature. But, from another point of view, he was only going back to the plain teaching of the Bible. Nobody can study the Hebrew contribution to thought and life without realizing how strong is the emphasis of the Old Testament on the importance of the bodily life. To divide human nature into two parts and to say of one, the spiritual, "This merits careful attention," and of the other, the physical,

"This is not the real concern of religion," is to be both unscientific and unscriptural. On this point the important contribution of the Bible is in close accord with the best thought of modern science.

Kingsley was determined to spend the last ounce of his energy in support of his deep convictions. His Christianity was as far removed as possible from either the ascetic or the purely academic types. Worship, he believed, found its necessary supplement in definite social service; the culture of the mind and the supply of fresh air were, from his point of view, essential in the well-poised life. He could not countenance a Christian society which tolerated without complaint the evils of slum life. The principle of unrestrained individualism and unrestricted competition—so dear to the eighteenth-century commercial mind in England—aroused his bitter antagonism. The policy of "Laissez-faire" seemed to him to be immoral. After all, he said, industry is concerned not with wages and profits, but, fundamentally, with men, and any social order which loses its sense of human values

in a mad scramble after profits is unworthy of the name "Christian." There is no doubt that Kingsley sometimes spoke in too vigorous language, and perhaps by the apathy of the times was driven to extreme statements. But anyone who cares to survey the history of the English Church life during the fifty years since his death will readily admit that his idealism and practice made an enduring contribution to the power of religion in our land.

While Charles Kingsley was pursuing his vigorous Christian social propaganda, there was arising, in another quarter, a movement which was to become the most definite nineteenth-century attempt to bring the Gospel within the reach of the slum-dweller. William Booth, born in Nottingham in 1829, began his religious career in the Church of England, but at the age of fifteen joined the Wesleyan Methodists, and soon became the leader of a band of young evangelists. These men worked among the very poor, aiming at definite conversions. It was a time of unrest within the Wesleyan Church, and eventually William Booth became a minister

of the Methodist New Connection. He felt that in this denomination he would have more freedom for his evangelistic fervour. Until 1861 he laboured in the circuits, but thereafter he sought a freer field for his enthusiasm, and, with his wife, travelled about the country conducting religious services. Then he felt the call to London. "One day there stood upon the kerbstone of a dreary East End street known as the Mile End Waste a young stranger, alert and eagle-eyed. No one knew him, and he knew not a soul in that grim district of small dull houses and large prosperous gin palaces and spirit vaults. Half a million people lived within a mile of where he stood and spoke, and when he was told that ninety out of every hundred of them never heard the sound of a preacher's voice, he vowed there and then that they should hear his voice, and that his life should be devoted to them, to their salvation."[1]

The Mission which William and Catherine Booth began in the East End of London was

[1] H. Friederichs, "The Romance of the Salvation Army," p. 27.

directed to the lowest of the low. They dreamed of making new men out of the waste of society. They turned their dream into glorious achievement. After ten years of hard work, carried on in face of much difficulty, the Christian Mission, as it was called, was being maintained at over thirty stations. Catherine Booth, a woman of great vision, intellectual power, and commanding eloquence, extended the work in the provinces, and their Mission developed into the now famous and universally respected Salvation Army. When he began his work in the East End, William Booth did not dream of anything more than the local work, but the success attending his methods urged him beyond his first plans, until to-day the Salvation Army is established in over fifty countries and colonies, preaches the Gospel in thirty languages, has some fifteen thousand officers wholly devoted to its service, and maintains rescue homes, food depôts, labour bureaux, shelters for men, women, and children, homes for ex-criminals, and a score of agencies in which the spirit of the Christian evangel finds practical expression.

By its organization and its methods the Salvation Army has secured a unique place among the religious forces of our time. It differs greatly from the religious denominations; for example, in its detailed organization and discipline, with its military terms; in its abandonment (in 1882) of the administration of the Sacraments—its attitude on this point at the present time being practically identical with that of the Society of Friends, though "The Army has never denied the value of the Sacraments in individual cases, and, indeed, occasionally, its members have been granted liberty to partake of these ordinances in one or other of the Churches."[1] The doctrinal standards of the Army are in general those of the evangelical Churches, but everything is subordinated to the central need of man, the need of conversion. It must not be imagined that the great work accomplished by the Booths and their followers is first of all social. It is essentially a spiritual movement. Underlying all its activities is the

[1] Article on "Salvation Army," in "Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics," vol. xi., p. 158.

dominant purpose—to win men and women for Christ. It was this purpose that captured William Booth in his earliest days, and in the pursuit of it he found that certain methods achieved success; it is the method rather than the aim that has brought the Salvation Army so prominently before the world. In the founder's own words: "I soon became convinced that the best way to reach with the Gospel of Christ the large classes of the population lying entirely outside the influence of the Churches was by means of those who had themselves belonged to those classes. Therein lay what may be called the germ of the Salvation Army. From that point everything else, or nearly everything else in our peculiar propaganda, has proceeded."[1] To go to the people with Christ's message, to attract the people by music or any other method, to win them for Christ, and then to set the converts to work in the evangelization of the communities from which they sprang: this was the method. It was a sound missionary instinct that led

[1] In the Preface to "Romance of the Salvation Army."

General Booth to this line of attack, and the Army owes a great deal to converted prize-fighters, drunkards, and the like who turned their energies into the evangelistic channel.

The Salvation Army, like all great movements, has been subjected to criticism since its inception. The form of discipline adopted, and the nature of Army services, do not appeal to everyone, and there is no doubt that it is necessary to get the Salvationist point of view before we can appreciate the meetings with their extravagant and sometimes apparently irreverent procedure. "Many Army services," says General Bramwell Booth, "are punctuated from first to last with joyous exclamations, clapping of hands, laughter or tears. The soul-winning propaganda of the Salvation Army, as illustrated in its street marches and in meetings of an unusual type, have sometimes taken the form of almost physical persuasion."[1] If this kind of propaganda is not to our taste, we ought to be careful lest the special method of the Salvationists blinds us to the

[1] In "Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics," xi. 158.

real value of their work. To its honour the Army from the first has recognized the value of that ministry which women are peculiarly fitted to exercise. To see the well-known "Army bonnet" in the hideous and soul-destroying areas of slumland, to note the familiar uniform wending its way through the crowded streets and in the tenements of our cities, to imagine what the countless Army shelters and rescue homes must mean to thousands of our unfortunate fellow-men—this is to be filled with wonder and gratitude for so fine a work. "If the Salvation Army were wiped out of London," said C. H. Spurgeon, "five thousand extra policemen could not fill its place in the repression of crime and disorder." And a famous scholar of the Anglican Church, Bishop Lightfoot, pointed out that "whatever may be its faults, the Salvation Army has recalled us to the lost ideal of the work of the Church—the universal compulsion of the souls of men."

In both the cases we have surveyed in this chapter—the work of Charles Kingsley and of William Booth—we have seen the social

application of Christian principles as the expression of a deep spiritual conviction. We err if, in either case, we regard the social work as complete in itself. The careful attention to details of social life followed, in a natural evolution, from the first principles of Jesus. The Gospel is not something which works out *in vacuo;* its sphere is the full life of man, and there is no part of his social relationships to which the Christian ethic does not apply. It is to the credit of these men who took the Gospel to the slums that they asserted their point of view, and thus helped to counteract those tendencies which keep the vision of the Church restricted to her own immediate borders. The spirit of the nineteenth-century Christian social reformers is essentially the spirit of the Friars, expressed differently because of the different conditions of social life. It is, at heart, the missionary spirit, for whether the field is across the seas in the midst of superstition and heathenism, or near at hand amid the grave social problems of our developed civilization, the need is fundamentally the same—the application of the

power of Christ to the challenge of human nature. It is, morever, the same spirit which has prompted all Christian enterprise, whatever the century or the special line of application. In forms of speech, modes of dress, manner of life, there is little similarity between an early Christian martyr, an Eastern ascetic, a Western monastic, a wandering Friar, a nineteenth-century missionary; but there is the same passionate loyalty to Christ, the same spirit of self-surrender, the same Divine urge prompting to wholehearted discipleship.

As we approach the end of these very cursory studies, certain conclusions force themselves upon us, and a summary of these may prepare the way for our final consideration—discipleship in the twentieth century. We did not make a mistake in describing the Christian life as adventurous and romantic. There have been, and still are, all the elements of adventure in the Christian campaign. The emotions of explorers, pioneers, fearless venturers into unknown wastes, have been shared by Christian enthusiasts. The fight against error, prejudice, the tendencies

of human nature, is revealed, in our study, as not without thrill and excitement. There is more than a touch of romance in the contact with the idealism of Christ, with that realm of spiritual values which He alone fully represents, and in the consciousness of His living Presence.

It is clear, further, that any really valuable achievement demands a conviction that the Christian religion is worth while. Casual and half-hearted following never yet achieved anything; the mere suggestion of it is unworthy of that great tradition which the heroes of bygone days have bequeathed to us. It was nothing less than such a conviction that sent Paul over Asia Minor, the martyrs to their tortures, the ascetics to their extreme (and sometimes apparently absurd) lengths of self-denial, the Friars away from the safety and comfort of monastic piety, the missionaries to the risks and ventures of a strange land, the social reformers to the dens of misery and vice. In every case there was an easier alternative. But they who had caught the Master's spirit never sought the way of least

resistance. The noblest precedents always pointed to the thorn-strewn track. And in the early days, as soon as the Church had recovered from her foreshortened view of the approach of the End of the Age, discipleship went on its way confident that in Christ humanity had a Saviour who would stand the test of any and of every age. Amid all the differences of theological point of view there was always, in the clearest thought and experience of the Church, the strong idea "Christ is adequate." It is this that links the past to our present age, and will link our generation to generations yet to be. The Christian disciple believes that Christ spoke the simple truth when He said: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

CHAPTER VII

THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY DISCIPLE

MANY of the old ancestral homes of England contain picture galleries wherein hang noble portraits of men and women who have honourably borne the family name in bygone generations. It is not an unusual thing, we imagine, for the young heir of a distinguished line to conduct his friends through the spacious hall, pointing out with pride a portrait here, a miniature there, his noble forebears who bravely served their country and their king. It is with feelings somewhat akin to these that we have wandered through the long centuries of Christian history, pausing here and there to note distinguished servants of Christ. The youth of our Christian churches to-day enter into a heritage which cannot be excelled in any other society in the world. It does not matter how great the change which has marked the theological thought of the centuries, the forms of administration, the styles

of worship; as we take our stand in the twentieth century the whole past of the Church Catholic is ours, its bravery, its zeal, its devotion. In a sense which overrides denominational differences every twentieth-century Christian is debtor to all the prayer, thought, and service that has gone before. It is a pleasant heritage, and at the same time a challenging one. We are now to consider this challenge; to inquire how the discipleship of to-day may be at once true to the best in the past and alert to the needs of the present.

The contribution which any age can make to Christian life and thought is largely determined by the character of the period. This follows from our conception of Christianity as a spirit, a life, which must establish contacts and make adjustments according to the special needs of the time. If there is advance in knowledge, it is the duty of Christian thinkers to take account of this; if there is a development in the social or the international environment, the essential principles of the Gospel must be related to the new conditions which arise. It is clear,

therefore, that if we are to form any definite idea of the kind of discipleship specially necessary for to-day, we must take account of the conditions of modern life. Here four prominent features of our religious environment call for notice: (1) The atmosphere of religious freedom; (2) the new intellectual standards; (3) the restless spirit of present-day life; (4) the new unity of the world.

Religious liberty has been dearly bought. We gain an idea of the price when we watch an early Christian martyr wending his painful way to the arena, or note the tyrannies of an Inquisition or a Star Chamber, or gather with little bands of seventeenth-century Nonconformists in their little chapels, hidden away in remote and unfrequented spots. The principle of toleration has been very slow in coming into its own, and all through the history of the Church we see the hand of authority weighing heavily on the little groups who longed for freedom. The chains and fetters which have hampered the movement of the Church have been of various kinds; here the life of the Church is circumscribed by State

control and interference; there it is the tyranny of dogma or of an infallible hierarchy; while in every age the spirit of true religion has been in danger from excessive organization and the claims of the external. Christians who have caught the spirit of New Testament Christianity have never yearned for absolute freedom, the liberty to do as they liked under all conditions; this were better named licence, and has no place within the Christian rule of life. The true servant of Christ will be proud, like Paul, of his bondage—bondage to Christ and the Divine laws He embodied. Yet there is a freedom which is absolutely essential to the Christian spirit, the freedom from every kind of authority which usurps the true authority of Christ, or erects false intermediaries between God and the human soul. This kind of freedom has ever been in danger, and men have had to fight and suffer, even unto death, that it might be preserved. To-day we enjoy the results of this fight. A young Christian may hold whatever views he pleases, may worship in whatever form best suits his needs, may pursue the inclination

of his mind without fear of State interference, religious persecution, or social ostracism. Never, for example, in the whole course of its history did Nonconformity occupy such an honourable place as it does to-day. There are intense bigots here and there—there always will be—but they do not represent the religious temper of England as a whole. The attitude now is rather that of easy tolerance; but in the very ease, there lurks a real danger for our youth.

It is fashionable among us to decry the rigid and somewhat austere religion of our forefathers. We speak, in a tone of superiority, of those days when Calvinistic theology found an expression in long sermons, an emphasis, sometimes rather harsh, on abstract dogma, and very strict ideas of what the Christian life ought to be. Some readjustments certainly were needed, especially a greater emphasis on love as the central principle of the Christian religion. But it is necessary to bear in mind that the "stiff" religion of olden days did produce a fine type of Christian, with spiritual stamina and power to endure. We may

grant that the Victorian Sunday was, in some ways, a "dull" day, that the Church life of that period paid altogether inadequate attention to the needs of the young, that its theology needed more definite social application; yet it may be doubted whether the other extremes, a "Continentalized" Sunday, a multitude of organizations, a social-political gospel, are likely to present a more faithful witness to Christ. Everyone will retort: "We must find the middle way between the two extremes." This, certainly, is the ideal, but in the attainment of it the Christian youth of our churches need to be on their guard. A broad-minded generation may easily become a shallow generation, and if the Church of the twentieth century is to make a valuable contribution to our times, that can only come through personal consecration, fidelity to the basic principles of New Testament Christianity, and a spirit as ardent and enthusiastic as that which marked our predecessors in the great ages of Christian progress. The way to church is now broad and plain, and we do well to make it as attractive as we can; it still remains,

however, that the Way of Christ is the way of strong and sacrificial resolution.

Many of the problems which beset the Church in the twentieth century arise from the distinct intellectual progress which has marked the last few generations. The general level of education is higher. There has been great improvement in educational method. There is now greater educational opportunity—what used to be described as a "ladder" of opportunity is now more correctly described as a "highway." The modern movement is to intensify and lengthen the training of boys and girls. Continuation schools and evening classes of various kinds are a happy symbol of the new outlook. We see the difference in popular education when we go back to the beginnings of such religious movements as the Adult School. When this movement began its most beneficent work, many of its adherents could neither read nor write. Adult Schools, like early Sunday Schools, were called upon to teach what is now a commonplace of elementary education. The educational advantage of the vast masses of our popula-

tion, during the last hundred years, has enormously increased, and the general intellectual level is consequently higher.

It is not only in popular education that we note advances. The last half of the nineteenth century was a period of scientific advance. One by one the mysteries of Nature gave way before the inquirer and the experimenter, and the result was not merely enthusiasm and excitement in professorial circles; the new knowledge found its way, in popular form, to the intelligent artisan, just as more recent developments in the so-called "New Psychology" have quickly found a popular audience. Add to all this the critical study of the Bible, and the modern emphasis on the comparative study of religion, and we have a changed condition which is bound to react upon our attitude to the questions of religion.

The problem which has arisen is not new. The history of the Christian Church has seen many intellectual movements, though none on such a popular scale. Just as we have studied various types of Christian enterprise, so we might have passed in review the

various ways in which Christian thinkers have presented the same Gospel in the intellectual forms of their time. And if Christian experience in the past is any guide, we ought not to fear the stirrings of men's minds, for it was a revival of learning, we remember, that resulted in the Reformation, with its solid gains to the cause of true religion. But although the problem as a whole is not new, certain aspects of it bring the Church face to face with a situation which she has never, in the same degree, known before. To take two points: The results of literary and historical criticism are forcing the Church to a definite pronouncement on her attitude to the Bible; the claims of modern psychology (a science as yet in its infancy) have brought a very real challenge to the meaning and spirituality of religious experience.

In what ways does this new temper affect the Christian disciple of to-day? First of all, the youth of to-day have to *think* their way through religion. It remains, as ever, that religion is essentially experience; not an assent to certain dogmas, but a living

experience of God in Christ. But no young man of the present age can rest content for long without seeking some explanation and interpretation of his experience. He feels that to be a man of faith is not to be credulous, but to be convinced in every part of his nature. He cannot always put his feelings into words, but he knows, in his quiet moments, that God's truth must, in the nature of the case, accord with all that honest inquiry and noble search may reveal in any realms of human knowledge. He cannot, therefore, be suspicious of any kind of human inquiry, for he feels that all truth, like all beauty and all duty, is an expression of the Divine Spirit. There cannot be any real conflict between science and the Bible. He may not be able to set the matter out quite clearly, but he knows that what God has revealed along one line must harmonize with what He reveals along any other. This is the attitude of mind that is very common among the young men and women of to-day. It is often inarticulate, but we cannot doubt that it is there. It is not that our young and alert minds wish to rationalize everything—

our present age is learning the limits as well as the power of reason; but they wish to feel that the Gospel, traditionally honoured and openly vindicated in Christian experience, has nothing to fear from any criticism or any development of human knowledge.

This is surely a healthy attitude, and will deliver us from any perils of obscurantism. It prefers one certainty, clearly thought-out and tested in experience, to any dozen ill-digested articles in a formal creed; it seeks a religion that will capture the whole personality and not merely sway the emotions; it has little sympathy with the attempt to fasten interest on the accidental and the external. It is the attitude of the open mind, at once broad and deep. Its confidence is in Christ Himself, who, in His own Nature, is the guarantee of all the principles and values which are essential in the Christian attitude to God and man.

This outlook, so characteristic of the intelligent youth of to-day, will determine our presentation of the Gospel to the twentieth century. It is already forcing us back to discover again what are the really essential

things in Christian discipleship. We are learning to distinguish between an essential revelation of truth and the thought-forms in which it was originally presented; between personal discipleship and enthusiastic assent to outworn formulæ and decayed dogmas; between the all-importance of Christian experience and the relatively secondary character of its explanation.

This alertness in class and congregation is rendering most valuable service to the Church. It is quietly insisting on the need for a ministry that is truly cultured, and for a general Christian practice that is thoroughgoing and enthusiastic. Its beneficial results are being felt in every part of Christian activity. The new attitude to the Bible—"Let all the light of Truth, from every quarter, beat upon the Sacred Page"—is restoring it to its lost place in the affection and the mind of our generation. Nothing is more necessary in our time than this restoration. Vigorous and successful Christian enterprise needs a view of the Bible which clearly declares its real authority and inspiration. The insistence on

the need for definite personal loyalty to Christ is helping us to recover the apostolic spirit. The social emphasis of to-day is urging us to the full and fearless application of the Christian Gospel to every sphere of thought and activity. And the more we think about it, and try to express it in the terms of our day, the more we try to fulfil its inner spirit, the more wonderful does that Gospel become.

Many writers engaged in describing our post-war civilization have commented on the spirit of restlessness which seems to have caught the population of these islands in its grip. It is not our experience only, but the common experience of all countries whose youth, a decade ago, was engaged in the greatest conflict of modern times. We cannot devote our best thought and energy to the waging of war, wrest millions of men from their normal avocations, subvert our normal order and scale of values, interrupt, at its most critical period, the development of our youth in peaceful enterprises, without inevitably bringing down upon ourselves a bewildering mass of problems. The years

since the Armistice have been years of unrest, internationally, politically, industrially. The particular expressions of this unrest which have marked the world of commerce are but symptoms of an underlying disorder which affects the whole social body. Fundamentally, our restlessness is a matter of the spirit; along one line it expresses itself in the questions of hours and wages; along another (and with this we are here concerned) it leaves its trace in the religious temper. There has been a strong movement towards Church unity, and not the least important result of this has been a new consideration of the principles for which we individually stand. But there are other symptoms. There has been a recrudescence of old cults. Men and women, eager to escape from the materialism which precipitated the world into conflict, have turned eyes of longing to Theosophy, to various forms of faith-healing, and many have begun to make timid experiments in Spiritism. Now, in face of this, Orthodoxy can adopt one of two attitudes: it may either hold up its hands in horror and quote familiar Biblical passages

against this or that practice—the easier method; or it can seek to understand this deep disorder, probe down to its depths, gain an idea of what it is that so many are seeking, and then, in a spirit of sympathy with all inquirers, set forth the Christian religion as the way of peace and assurance. This should be the attitude of the twentieth-century disciple who seeks to serve his Master in his own age.

We have abundant evidence to show that, properly understood, the religion of Christ can actually supply that peace and inner conviction that so many are striving for to-day. For a distressed and bewildered age the reading of Church history is a great comfort. We are all apt to think that our problems are the most acute that man has ever had to face. But let us realize certain facts that are plain on the page of history. Some of the difficulties of modern thought, in a slightly different form, confronted the Apostle Paul. Problems of the spiritual life, both here and hereafter, have perplexed many ages of Christian experience. Long before modern conditions were dreamed of,

men knew the dull, bitter agony of swift removal from these plains of earth, and the perplexities of spirit when a promising life was speedily cut short. To be more specific: the Colossian Church knew the dangers of detracting from the supreme and unapproachable glory of Christ; the days of Augustine knew the despair of a barbarian approach which threatened to lay waste the fair fields of Christian culture; and the history of martyrdom, in every age, shows that men and women had learned the secret of conquering the grave and robbing the Unknown of its terrors.

Such facts as these, taken together, mean that there is a power in the Christian evangel that can meet life's emergencies. There is an inner poise of the soul that Christ Himself demonstrated, recommended, and which is within the reach of all who approach Him in penitence and humility. There is an inner conviction which, when once attained, can carry men and women through deeds of daring and endurance, enabling them amid the confusions of their time to play the noble part. So much we learn from

our study of the past. It is the least common denominator of Christian experience, that which marks all true discipleship. It is this conviction which makes a Christian disciple to defy a Cæsar, brave the rigours of a desert, face the pains of the amphitheatre, venture to an unknown land, or set his face against the popular movements of his time. Whatever Christian men have achieved, they have achieved by virtue of this inner conviction. The final Christian appeal has always been, and must be, to experience. To examine the lives of the saints is to find a real Christ, a Cross that is full of power, a living Presence that fills the soul with strength and hope. To the Christian the Cross and the Empty Tomb have always spoken of the greatest things in the world. In the experience of Christ he has found escape from the worldly spirit and worldly standards and the world's doubts about the future.

The disciple of to-day, therefore, has behind him his own personal experience, and also the experience of many types in vastly different ages. When he takes his stand for

Christ, it is not a doubtful venture, a timid and hesitating experiment. It is a stand justified by the history of the best thought and most heroic achievement during nineteen centuries. The Christian of to-day has a message for to-day, with all its doubts and turmoil of spirit. He insists on looking at the world through the eyes of Christ. Life itself he finds interesting and worth while—it is the sphere of his soul's training. He does not lose his faith in mankind—in spite of all human evils, Christ thought mankind to be worth a Cross. He does not lose his grip on the meaning of existence even in time of suffering, for pain has a ministry in the perfecting of the spirit. He does not fear the grave—he remembers the Master's word: "I go to prepare a place for you." The unrest of our age is very challenging to the Christian disciple, but he can say with utter simplicity, yet with the wealth of the centuries behind him: "There is peace and conviction and true harmony of life in the following of Christ." And so the unrest of our time is much more than a challenge; it is an opportunity.

We turn to that most important feature of the modern world, its new unity. "The unification of the world," says J. H. Oldham, "is an accomplished fact." "The task of exploration has been completed. The inventions of the nineteenth century, and the development of communications resulting from them, have made the whole world accessible. The eager search for new sources of wealth has resulted in a world-wide network of commercial organization, and knit the peoples of the world together in a single "Great Society," the different parts of which have become dependent on one another. We can hardly calculate the degree in which flying, wireless telegraphy, and broadcasting—discoveries of the present century—will accelerate the process of unification. For better or worse the various families of mankind have been bound together in a common life, and have to learn how to adjust their relations in this unified whole."[1]

When we inquire more closely into the

[1] J. H. Oldham, "Christianity and the Race Problem," pp. 9, 5.

nature of this unity we find that it is physical, geographical, commercial, rather than moral and spiritual. It is not that unity of idealism, of moral standards, that the best thought of our time realizes to be so necessary for the true prosperity of the world. There are, indeed, many forces which are antagonistic to this moral unity. The doctrines of racial domination are being propagated, and modern science is called in to justify this teaching. It is urged that, for example, the white races must devote themselves to the cultivation of such conditions as will ensure their continual superiority over yellow races. We have already had an example of what extreme nationalism can accomplish in the withering of civilization; one nation sets itself against all comers, resolved to stamp its dominance on the world—and the result is war with its devastating results. To substitute racial domination for national domination is merely to intensify the evil. Such a policy, so far from hastening the end of wars, is calculated to encourage and promote them; and this, in view of the application of science to methods of warfare,

spells unnamed horrors for the future. Consider, for example, the tremendous strides made by the yellow races in their absorption of Western culture, and especially in their diligent studentship in the schools of Western warfare. What is the inevitable outcome? White versus yellow, and a conflict which, whatever the result, would jeopardize the very civilization which it has taken centuries to build. It is not enough to establish highways between the nations; it is important to ask: "What is it that we shall send along those highways?" From the commercial point of view a unified world is an advantage; from the moral point of view it is a peril, unless the unity be turned into a unity of moral aspiration and spiritual idealism.

This situation has a distinct message for the Christian of to-day. Pre-eminent among the great religions of the world, Christianity has the universal outlook and a worldwide message. Its ideal is that of a universal community of all races and colours, bound together in a following of the Saviour of the world. A true nationalism, when not carried

beyond its proper limits, has real value. The virtues of patriotism and love for one's people are not to be despised—they have given generously to the moral wealth of the world. But the Christian religion, by its very nature, rises above national limits, and in its broad sweep embraces all sorts and conditions of men. It considers not colour, but humanity; not achievement, but need.

If Christians are true to the basic principles of their religion they cannot avoid a concern for the moral and spiritual redemption of backward races. But now, in view of the new unity of the world, with its problems and dangers, the task of worldwide evangelism becomes more than the concern of the few; it is an imperative necessity for the *whole Church*. There was a time when the dreams of missionary pioneers were regarded as mere dreams—insubstantial and having no likelihood of ever passing into reality; now we know that they were clear-sighted predictions of the most pressing need of civilization itself. The safety of the modern world demands that its physical unity be turned into a spiritual unity. The races of

the earth must be linked together by more than the laws of supply and demand; they must become members of a great universal community wherein the principles of the godly life are exalted above the laws of economic progress.

The Church of the twentieth century, therefore, is challenged as never before to missionary enterprise. We may contrast our present position with those days when pioneers like Carey had to plead unceasingly for support. Much has happened since then to strengthen the missionary impulse; the wonderful success of the work on the foreign fields, an awakening of the Church to her responsibility, a broader world-outlook. But stronger than any of these factors is the character of our Faith and the insistent call of Christ. Long before any of our modern arguments could be adduced there were men and women in the Christian movement who lifted up their eyes to the fields and, out of sheer devotion to the Master, bore His Gospel to peoples who had never heard His Name. To-day we need the old spirit, the old venturing, and if this can be joined to

the vastly greater opportunity of modern times, our century should greatly extend the boundaries of the Kingdom. Into the hands of the Church God has placed the living seed. Wherever that seed has been sown the old miracle has been renewed—the desert has been made to rejoice and blossom as the rose. It is for our present generation to disdain the miser's grip, and with open hand and heart scatter the truth of Christ broadcast o'er the earth.

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The days of Christian romance and adventure are not all of the past; if we have fully caught the spirit of Christ we shall face our twentieth-century challenge with the rich promise of a venture that is worth while. To stand firmly by the principles which the New Testament sets clearly forth, to apply those principles to every sphere where men congregate and labour, no matter what prejudice or vested interest we may disturb, to proclaim our Gospel by the aid of true culture and in terms understood of our generation, to point the certain way to the harmonious and fruitful life, to watch the

finger of Christ as He points to the distant ends of the earth—this is to engage in an enterprise which calls for the best that youth can offer. And when the history of the present epoch in the Christian Church comes to be compiled, it would be a glorious thing if our labours could be described in a chapter headed: "The Men who brought an Age-long Christ to a Worldwide Need."

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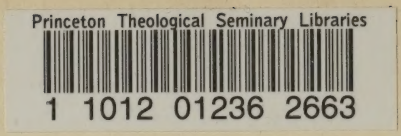
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